

Backstreets

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#47 FALL 1994

THE MAGAZINE OF NO SURRENDER



10TH ANNIVERSARY
Born IN THE USA
1984-1994

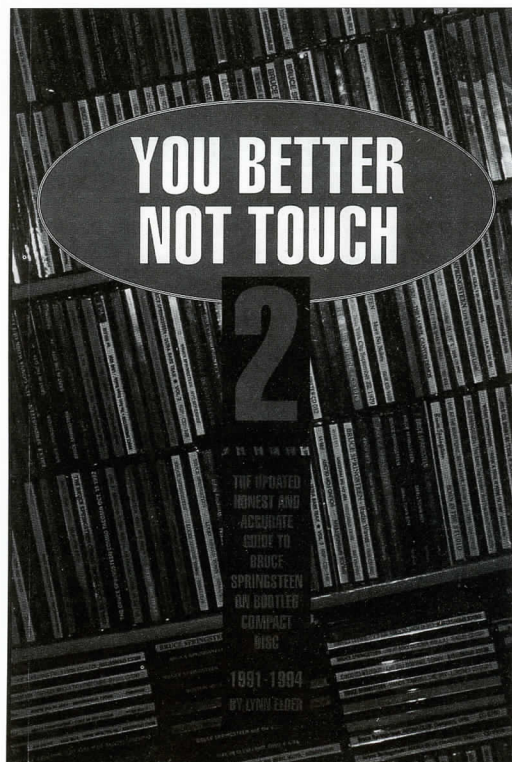


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When it comes to bootleg CDs...

YOU BETTER NOT TOUCH

The Boss Bootleg guides by Backstreets reviewer Lynn Elder

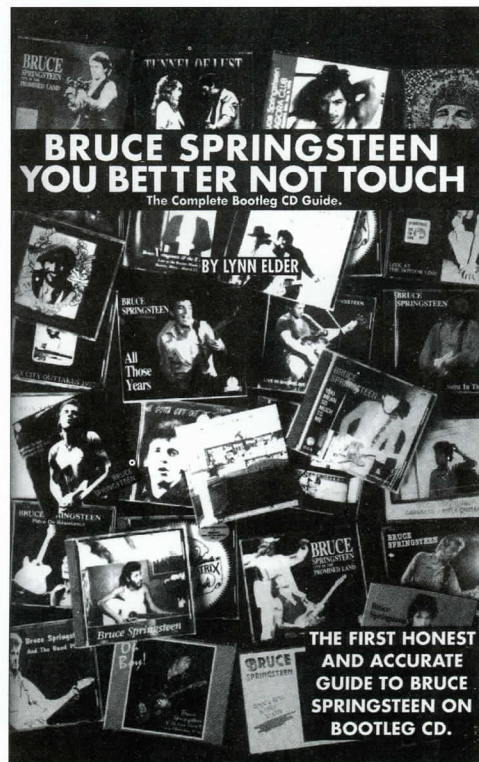


You Better Not Touch Vol. 2

is the newest installment in the most comprehensive, honest and accurate series of guides to Bruce Springsteen on bootleg compact disc! *You Better Not Touch 2* picks up where the first guide left off, covering approximately 150 CDs released since 1991. For each title, *You Better Not Touch 2* gives separate 1-10 ratings for SOUND QUALITY, PACKAGING, and PERFORMANCE, as well as an overall rating of 1-5 stars. In addition, each page lists LABEL, TAPE SOURCES (SOUNDBOARD, AUDIENCE, BROADCAST, STUDIO, VIA VIDEO, VIA VINYL, or ACETATE), DATE, VENUE, LOCATION, NUMBER OF PAGES IN BOOKLET, a comparison of the bootleg VS. TAPES IN CIRCULATION, TIME ON EACH DISC, SONG TITLES, and finally, COMMENTS. For honest, exhaustive advice on the latest Springsteen bootlegs, *You Better Not Touch 2* will guide you through the junk to find the jewels.....\$20 plus shipping

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has been out of print for some time, but recent customer demand has finally brought about a second printing! This is the first complete guide to



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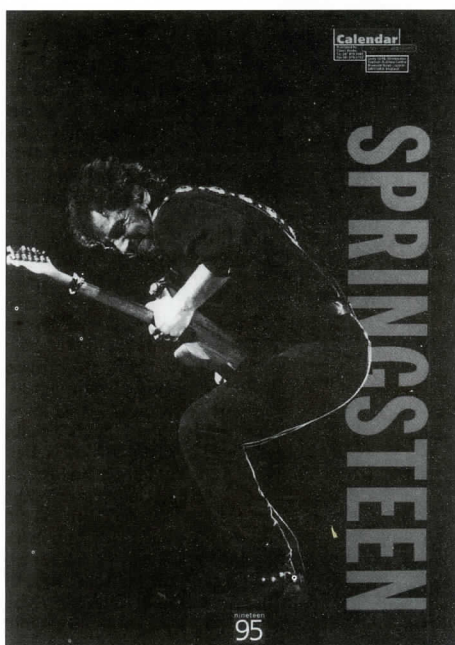
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1995 UK CALENDAR

The perfect holiday gift for any Boss fan!

The brand new Springsteen calendar for 1995 is here! This edition features 12 great photos of Bruce, including one with the E Street Band, one with Miami Steve, and one with... Julianne(?!). A few sample shots are shown at right: onstage shots include the Bridge Benefit, *Tunnel of Love* Express Tour, and the '92-93 World Tour; offstage shots range from '70s beard to '90s imperial. Like last year's, there's not a lot of space for daily planning, but this Boss-a-month calendar will look great on your wall for the whole of 1995....\$15 plus shipping

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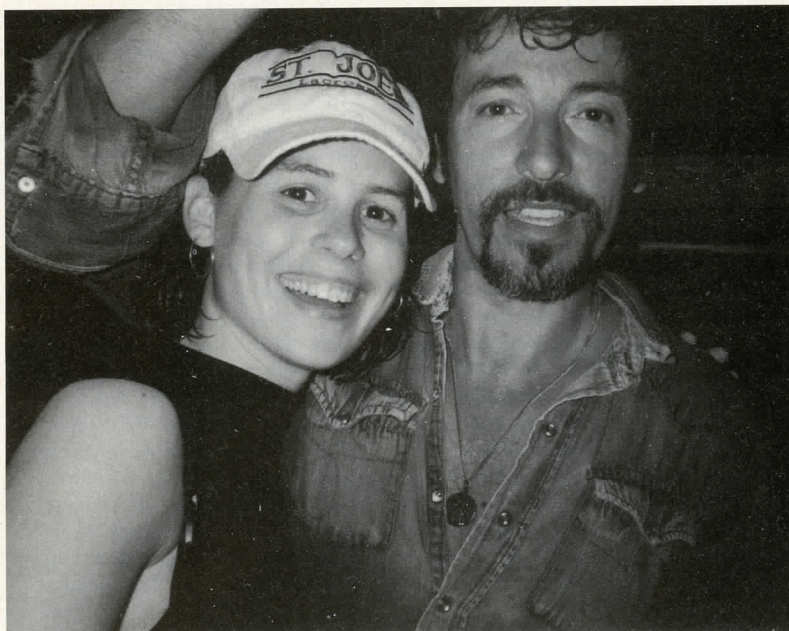
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Erin makes a new friend (and gets an old hat) at the Stone Pony, 7/16/94.

Backstreets

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C=NTENTS

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Fall 1994
BUSA Anniversary Special

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BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

Design and drawing by Arlen Schumer
Computer coloring by Ian Tetrault

LETTERS

YOU CAN'T SIT DOWN

Dear Editor:

The recent Stone Pony show with Springsteen and Southside was remarkable in many ways. That Bruce even showed was of course incredible in itself, but I also consider it remarkable that any of us who were standing near the stage survived for close to three hours.

There was no possibility of getting a drink or using the washroom without losing our hard earned spots. I would guess that by the end, the temperature was approaching triple-digits, especially near the front. Despite myself, I kept hoping that each song would be the last. My need for water (and fresh air) had actually conquered my desire to hear some more great music. But I stuck it out until the end.

Bruce's performance was of course spectacular, and you could see the enjoyment and satisfaction in his face. And let's not forget the intensity with which he attacked his guitar. I don't remember much of the first two songs, there was too much pushing, shoving, and noise in the crowd. By the time the band got to "Jersey Girl," everything was right in the audience. I think everyone was just really tired and really pleased to see Bruce. The audience was a sea of arms outstretched and swaying to the music.

I was amazed at the great

lengths that people traveled to see this show. My ten-hour journey paled in comparison to those I met who came from Minnesota, Indianapolis, and even a mother and daughter who came over from England! Many of these people I recognized as wizened veterans of the last Bruce tour. If the next tour is anything like the Pony show, we have a lot to look forward to.

Kevin Jessop
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

THE PRICE YOU PAY

Dear Editor:

This past Saturday night will go down as one of the special nights in my life. I'm only 22 years old, which puts me at too young of an age to have experienced Bruce's club performances. Before Saturday I was only fortunate enough to catch one, with Clarence at Tradewinds. I had decided not to go to the Pony on Saturday due to previous fruitless efforts of trying to catch Bruce. I had given up! However, when a friend of mine told me that Bruce would definitely be there, I couldn't believe the excitement that came over me. Actually, it caused me to have such an upset stomach that my girlfriend and I couldn't leave the house.

After we finally made it to the Pony, we couldn't believe what we were hearing. It was Bruce's voice. We parked the car, sprinted to the tent, and snuck past security (the show was sold out). We were able to catch the last ten minutes. It was exciting, but disappointing that due to my

weak stomach we missed most of the show.

We were going to stay at the Pony, but we received another tip that Bruce was going to Marz in Long Branch. I doubted it, but we gave it a shot. Before entering we peeked through a window to get a feel for what was going on inside. Believe it or not, the first thing I saw was this guy in denim and a hat that I knew was Bruce. Without hesitation I went right up to him and thanked him for the earlier performance, telling him how I missed some of it due to being sick. He and Patti got a big kick out of the story, especially how I told them I had to stop at a Burger King in Asbury Park for the bathroom while my idol was on-stage down the road. They both hung out amongst the crowd until three in the morning and were very receptive to everyone, even stopping to say good-night to us.

As I look back, for the last ten years I have dreamed of meeting him and of what I would say. I would never have thought I would be telling Bruce about my stomach problems!

Marc Cimino
Haslet, NJ

BABY, HE'S A ROCKER

Dear Editor:

In the last few issues, you've mentioned a few times that Bruce's next album could possibly be a solo album. I think that this would be a big mistake for his career. Three of his last five albums have been recorded by Bruce almost all by himself, and

that's the same with his latest single. Enough is enough.

These three albums and that single may have great lyrics, but the same can't be said about the music. Bruce is a talented guitarist, but he can't take the place of a full band. He's isolating himself more and more to record his music and I think he's going in the wrong direction. He needs talented musicians to help him improve the music of his songs.

It's been a decade since Bruce released his last real rock album. *Human Touch* was more pop than rock, and *Lucky Town* was country rock. If he's still a prisoner of rock 'n' roll, it's time to prove it. I'm telling people who don't really know Bruce that he's a rocker, and they laugh. It's been an eternity since he last had a hit with a rock song. He'd prove nothing by releasing another solo album—he needs a big rock album to reestablish himself as the Boss of rock.

Bruno Pelletier
Rimouski, Quebec, Canada

DOWN, DOWN, DOWN

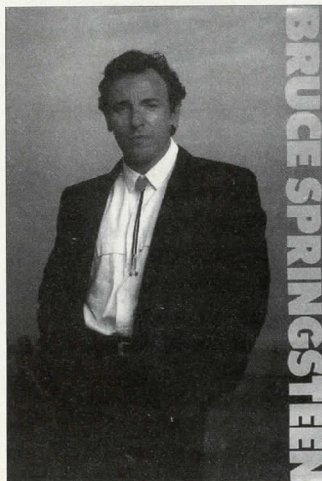
Dear Editor:

I listen with extreme envy to the reviews of recent Springsteen concerts. Australia, having had only one tour, nine years ago, has fans who suffer from more than a drought of the countryside: we have had a severe drought of live Springsteen concerts. To add to that, Sony seems to fall behind in promoting Springsteen here. Very few radio stations play his music, and it is particularly depressing for rural fans whose radio stations play very little else but country and classical.

On the other hand, "Streets of Philadelphia" received an incredible amount of airplay. It reached number five on the charts here and stayed in the Top Ten for weeks. If Bruce follows up with another release soon, his success with "Streets" would facilitate its promotion.

I agree with Christopher Phillips in his article, "Mystery Ride," when he says that part of his enjoyment of and respect for Bruce's music comes from the "progression and change" that the music has undergone with the maturing of Springsteen the man. I find I gain a different perspective for songs depending on what is happening in my life. If

OFFICIAL SPRINGSTEEN POSTERS FROM WINTERLAND



TUNNEL BEACH SHOT

Great color shot of Bruce against deep blue sky as seen in *Tunnel* tourbook. Pristine condition, on sale for **\$20**

'92 LEIBOVITZ SHOT

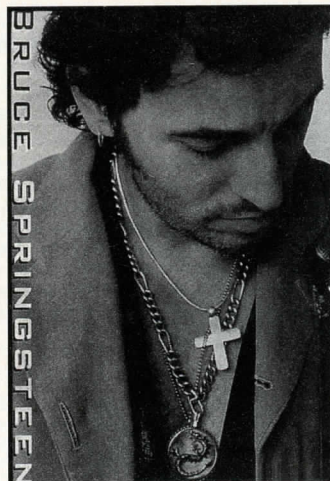
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Bruce had recorded "Living Proof" 14 years ago, I would not have been able to relate to it as I can now that I am the mother of five children. For me, it sums up the feelings I experienced with the birth of each child, feelings I could not adequately express until I heard "Living Proof."

Over the years I have done as much promoting of Springsteen in my own family as I can. Two of my daughters (14 and 11) are fans, and I'm working on the rest of the "tribe." The 14-year-old chose to do a project on Bruce (the topic was the past life of someone famous), and with the help of *Backstreets* and my knowledge she managed to score an incredible A+++.

Many fans here are so out of touch that they view Springsteen as something they enjoyed in the past. They may reflect on the ten hours they waited in queue for concert tickets nine years ago, but they have not progressed beyond that. I find it incredibly sad that they have missed out on the pleasure that the continued appreciation of Springsteen's music has given me.

Jedda Hingston
Coolah, N.S.W., Australia

BELIEVE IN THE FAITH

Dear Editor:

I received my MSW from Boston University in May 1993, and I work with clients having both a mental illness and an addiction. Some days I get really discouraged with the amount of illness, despair and poverty that I see. This is not meant to be a complaint, however, but to tell you how much I appreciate being able to listen to Bruce and go to his concerts (especially the one where Bruce gave my brother and me front row seats and later on kissed me while singing "Leap of Faith!"). Reading about him in your magazine has made me aware of all the good that started out with this one person and has radiated to millions of people who are all looking for the same things: acceptance, hope, and love.

Each of us can make a difference regardless of color, gender, profession, or income, and I hope more people will have faith in this. There is good, and good things do happen to good people. And as I tell my clients, who

have enormous amounts of courage, there is always hope. Bruce's lyrics and music have helped me to believe in that, and your magazine has helped give me even more insight into the contributions that this one person has made so graciously.

Barbara J. Morse
Kittery, ME

A PIRATE'S TREASURE

Dear Editor:

A few days ago a friend of mine called me and said she'd brought home a present for me from her trip to America. Well, it turned out to be a so-called TC8 version of the *Born to Run* album that she had bought in a second-hand store in Houston. Personally, I've never even heard of these kinds of tapes which sort of look like a ribbon for an electric typewriter. So now I thought of asking you, what do you know about them? Why are they never mentioned in connection with Bruce collectibles—are they rare, or is it just me who hasn't had my eyes open? I would appreciate it if you could give me some info on this TC8 system, or 8-Track system, as allegedly it is also called.

Karsten S. Andersen
Hvidovre, Denmark

SWEET BLESSINGS RAIN

Dear Editor:

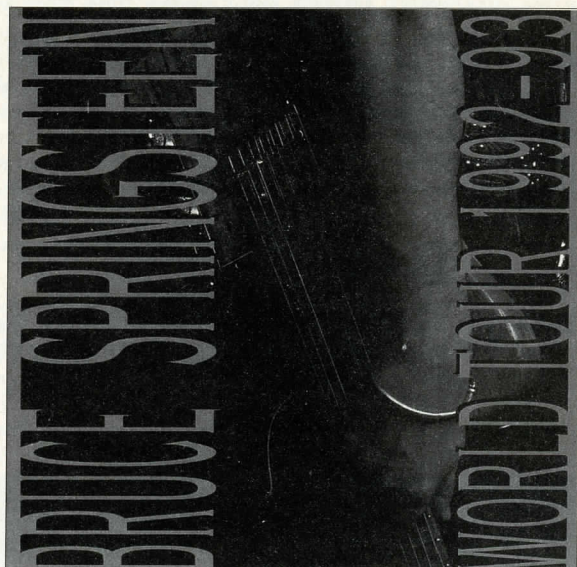
I have been a Bruce fanatic since 1975. I was living in Florence, Italy that year and my best friend sent me a tape of *Born To Run*. I was immediately hooked. When I returned to the U.S.A. I proceeded to buy all of Springsteen's old albums and became a devout Bruce follower.

Yesterday my fiancé Marc and I were married. During all the planning for our wedding I kept listening to music, trying to find a meaningful song for our first dance. I had *Lucky Town* blasting from my CD player when I came upon it. "If I Should Fall Behind" is one of the most beautiful songs he has ever written. I'd like to thank Bruce for allowing us to kick off our wedding reception with a song that will always hold a lot of meaning for me. (P.S.: "Leap of Faith" was a big hit last night, too!)

Cindy Ronca
San Luis Obispo, CA

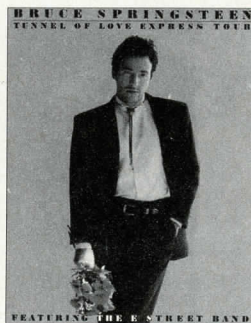
ORIGINAL SPRINGSTEEN TOURBOOKS

These officially-licensed tourbooks are out-of-print and have been unavailable anywhere since they were sold exclusively at concerts. Essential items and great gifts for any Bruce fan. ORDER EACH EDITION SEPARATELY OR TAKE ADVANTAGE OF A SPECIAL SAVINGS BELOW AND ORDER ALL THREE TITLES!



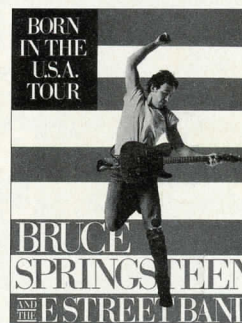
This 32-page color program features stunning color photos of Bruce on-stage and off, taken by Neal Preston, Annie Leibowitz, and others. Excerpt from Bill Flanagan's *Musician* story from May of 1992. Profiles on each of the new band members. Glossy covers, matte pages. A gorgeous edition.

WORLD TOUR '92-93 • \$15



This lavish, oversized tourbook sold on the *Tunnel of Love* tour contains dozens of striking color photos of Springsteen and the band, along with the lyrics to the LP (including "Roulette") and Bill Baro's excellent feature on *Tunnel* from *Newsweek*, November 2, 1987.

TUNNEL OF LOVE • \$15



Sold only on the 1984 tour, this book is a full-color chronology of Springsteen's career up to the beginning of the tour. Oversize red and white "jumping shot" cover, stunning on and off-stage photos unique to this program, band bios—a great piece.

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Springsteen's secret alter-ego

Larger Than Life

I always thought of Bruce Springsteen as the Superhero of Rock 'n' Roll.

Like the superhero Captain Marvel, who has the combined powers of several Greek gods and Old Testament patriarchs, Bruce is an almost supernatural hybrid of the great gods of rock 'n' roll. Like Elvis, Bruce is a singular, dynamic presence with a commanding vocal power; his poetic lyrics, an ongoing Great American Novel on record, give truth to his early label as the New Dylan; with the original E Street Band, Bruce captured the sheer joy, enthusiasm, and positive energy of the young Beatles; and, like any of the electric guitar gods of the '60s, Bruce can strike iconic guitar hero stances while playing soulful, melodic rhythm and lead solos. In short, Springsteen represents, in his music and persona, the sum total of everything that was both critically and commercially successful in rock 'n' roll between 1956 and 1970, with his "Born to Run" arguably the theme song of rock 'n' roll itself.

Rock 'n' roll and comic books have always had a unique symbiotic relationship in the skewed space-time continuum of pop culture. Rock 'n' roll's birth in 1956 coincided with the rebirth of the superhero genre—Elvis and the Flash appeared simultaneously (while Captain Marvel Junior's hairstyle allegedly provided the inspiration for Elvis' spitcurl). In the '60s we had the Fab Four revolutionizing rock 'n' roll while Stan Lee and Jack Kirby's Fantastic Four revolutionized comic books. And over a decade later, the rise of punk rock found its equivalent in the growth of alternative and self-published comics.

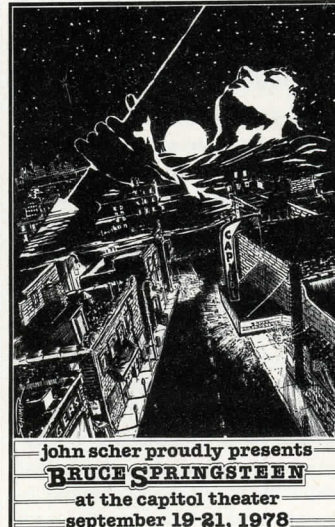
It was during the sax break in "Jungleland," performed live on one of the ten nights at the Byrne Arena during the '84 leg of the *Born in the U.S.A.* Tour that these ideas coalesced into the inspiration for this issue's wrap-around cover illustration. With

Clarence at the foot of the stage, bathed in red light, belting out that greatest of rock 'n' roll sax solos, Bruce, in a blue spot, perched himself on a riser at the back. He was punching his fist in the air on every beat of Max's drum, exhorting the crowd to do the same.

While this might have been a calculated arena-rock gesture in the hands of lesser rockers, in Bruce's hands the effect seemed perfectly spontaneous and breathtaking in its unity of music, community, and spirit. I remember thinking how Hollywood and Madison Avenue spend countless millions trying to recreate the spectacle that was occurring, but they never could. Bruce was just too real for them to duplicate. Though a man of modest height, Bruce seemed to tower over the stage, over the arena itself, larger than life. With the attendant stars and stripes imagery of *Born in the U.S.A.*, Bruce was like a real-life Captain America—the Superhero of Rock 'n' Roll.

Like Captain America, Bruce was an average Joe who was alchemically transformed into a superhero. In the comic book legend, puny Steve Rogers drank a secret serum and ballooned into a super-soldier to inspire America in her fight against the Axis. Springsteen, as his legend has it, got that guitar and learned how to make it talk, in turn inspiring us all. He is one of the major artistic influences in my life, showing me as much as the superheroes like Captain America taught me about right and wrong, good and evil, and how to fight and struggle for the things you believe in. Bruce helped give me the inner strength to pursue my own dream, that of doing comic book art professionally.

The image on the cover of this issue of *Backstreets* is sort of a full-color sequel to a black and white illustration I did of Bruce for the Capitol Theater program book in September of 1978. It heralded a



three-night stand at the Passaic, New Jersey theater (now defunct), the first of which was a radio broadcast. The illustration has since been bootlegged as a poster, while a photo of the marquee (featuring an illustration based on the one in the program book) adorns the cover of the bootleg CD *The Bosses (sic) Birthday Party*, which documents the third evening of that stand, September 23.

As its title suggested, *Darkness on the Edge of Town* was a black and white concept, from its lyrics, pared down to essential words, to its overall film-noir look, especially evident in Lynn Goldsmith's black-and-white *Darkness* songbook photos. But *Born in the U.S.A.* was unabashedly full-color; this was a record that spoke of the spectrum of the rock 'n' roll experience.

I tried to be true to that spirit.

—Arlen Schumer

★ ★ ★

On to business: With this issue, you'll notice that both the cover price and the subscription rate for *Backstreets* has increased slightly. This is the first time in over five years that rates have been raised. Considering that you're getting a magazine supported almost solely by subscription revenues, we feel you're still getting a bargain. *Backstreets* has

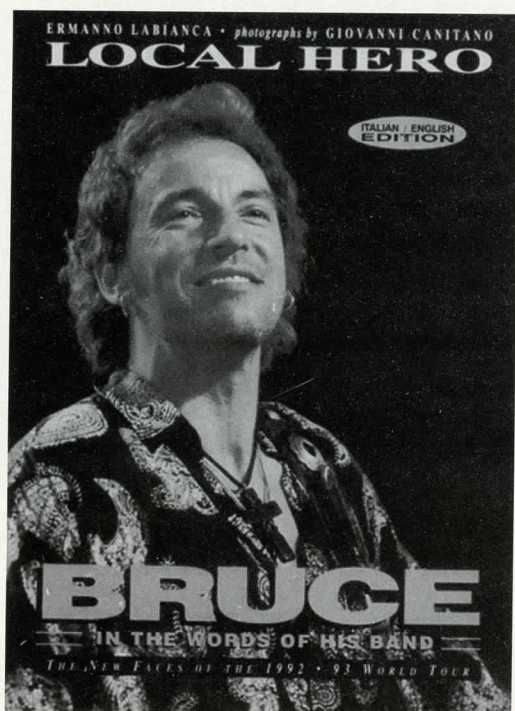
very little paid advertising, so it's the support of fans like yourself that helps us keep this small venture going. We've been around for more than 14 years now, thanks to your support, and we appreciate your kind words and renewals and gift subscriptions.

The new rates for subscriptions in the US and Canada are \$18 a year (in US funds); \$30 for two years (a savings of \$6); and \$40 for three years (a savings of \$14!). If you renew with the new three year rate, you're still paying less per year than the old standard one year rate, and you'll be saving more than \$20 off the newsstand rate. While *Backstreets* has consistent international distribution, we're not like *Newsweek*; if an outlet is sold out already you might not be able to find it. Subscribing is the best way to ensure that every single copy is sent to your door.

Overseas subscribers may not be able to find the magazine on any newsstands, so subscribing is even more important. Rates for overseas subscriptions are \$25 for one year (all prices in US funds); \$42 for two years; and a new three year rate of \$65. You're going to be playing Springsteen records in three years (hopefully playing a new box set by then) so why not make the commitment now and save money?

This being the holiday season, remember that gift subscriptions are always available. If you request a gift subscription to one of your friends or family and ask us to acknowledge it, we will enclose a card notifying the giftee of your gift.

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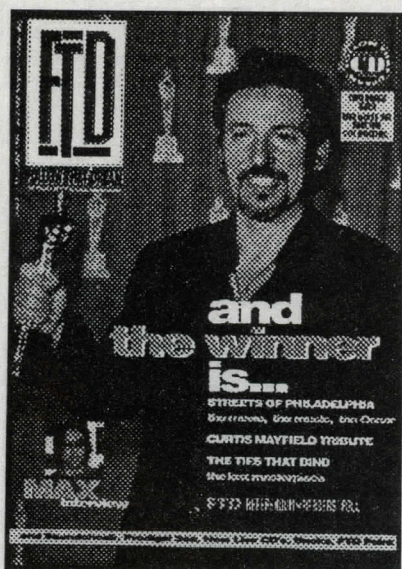
Follow That Dream presents **LOCAL HERO:** **BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN** **IN THE WORDS OF HIS BAND** The New Faces of the 1992-'93 World Tour

Through exclusive interviews, the new band members tell their stories, giving a glimpse into Springsteen's creative process and where his music is headed in the '90s. Author Ermanno Labianca and photographer Giovanni Canitano met, interviewed, and photographed all of the band members, matching their intimate portraits and stories with a collection of striking images of Springsteen on stage over the past decades. With 200 color pages and stunning photographs, LOCAL HERO is the first examination of the new Springsteen and the men and women he assembled to tour the world. Due to the small press run, supply is extremely limited. Text printed in both English and Italian.

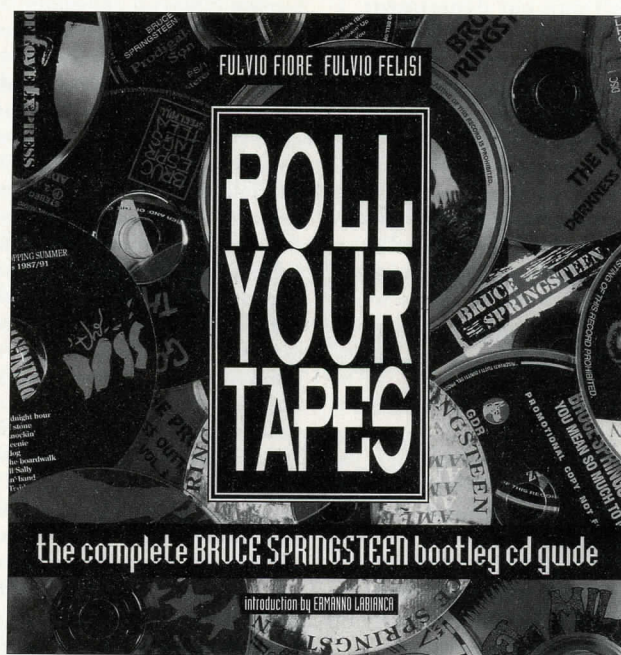
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ROLL YOUR TAPES

By Fulvio Fiore and Fulvio Felisi, with an introduction by Ermanno Labianca. *Roll Your Tapes* is an attempt to catalogue the 228 Bruce Springsteen bootleg CDs released between January 1989 and April 1994. Fiore and Felisi are both major Bruce collectors and fans from Milano who have produced this beautiful hardcover book, published in Italy and lavishly illustrated with tons of color photographs. Every CD set is reproduced here in full color, with track listings, running times, and venue/date listings for all songs. No ratings or comments on quality are given for any of the discs, but this book is a spectacular visual document of Boss bootlegs to date.

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THERE'S A PARTY TONIGHT

Despite hopeful rumors that whirled around for a year before the show, the Elvis Tribute down in Memphis-town came and went without an appearance from the Boss. Considering Bruce's particular fondness for the King, it seems surprising that Springsteen declined the invitation to play the first official tribute. David Hinckley, in his column for the *Daily News*, suggested that one thing keeping Bruce away was the involvement of promoter John Scher, whose Polygram Diversified Enterprises handled the promotion for the tribute to Presley. Scher and Springsteen, "once good friends," says Hinckley, "had a bitter falling out more than 10 years ago and haven't worked together since." . . . Also in the wishful-thinking-that-didn't-pan-out department: a track listing for Frank Sinatra's *Duets 2* was recently released to the press, and the rumored duet with Springsteen was nowhere to be found. In addition, the report of Springsteen's involvement on James Brown's upcoming *Live at the Apollo* sequel has so far proven unfounded. While the John Scher theory makes some sense, Springsteen might just be trying to avoid those inevitable Boss/King/Chairman of the Board/Godfather of Soul quips. . . . The latest rumor as we go to press is that Springsteen will be among several guests getting their yayas out on the Rolling Stones' pay-per-view concert in late November. While we're not holding our breath, "Street Fighting Man" with the Glimmer Twins would certainly be worth a little oxygen deprivation. . . .

OH, WHAT A THRILL

When we reported last March that the Mavericks included a cover of "All That Heaven Will Allow" on their latest record, the band had yet to receive the attention they deserved. Since then, attention has been paid, and they've developed an increasing following due in part to heavy touring and solid live shows. Talk of marathon performances usually brings Springsteen to mind, and in this case

that's no mere coincidence. Mavericks' singer/songwriter Raul Malo told *Billboard* about how much a Springsteen show on the *BUSA* tour affected him: "When I saw Springsteen, he changed my whole life, basically. He really inspired me to do [exhaustive, roller coaster shows], but with country music." . . . Mary Chapin Carpenter and The Band's Levon Helm are hosting a new weekly musical TV series, *The Road*. Included on a segment they taped together for the show was a cover of "Atlantic City," performed live in Nashville. . . .

JAZZ MUSICIANS

Clarence Clemons and his saxophone recently played side-kick to a different blue-collar hero on Michael Moore's satirical *TV Nation*. Moore, of *Roger & Me* fame, put together a segment on moving his show across the borderline to New Jersey to get a tax break; he brought Clarence along on a televised tour of the Garden State. . . . Clemons has been a very busy Big Man these days. In addition to his guest spot with Steve Smith and the Naked this summer, Clemons jammed at the Bottom Line with J. Geils and Magic Dick (who just released a new blues record together on Rounder). In October, the Big Man performed such E Street standards as "Rosalita," "Tenth Avenue Freeze-Out," and "Spirit in the Night" at a private wedding in Brooklyn. Finally, we were told that Clemons was on the airwaves in New York to promote not only a Big Brothers/Big Sisters awards dinner, but also, surprisingly, a new project. The word is that the Big Man has a new album in the works, though it's unclear whether he is currently associated with a label. He described the new album as unlike anything he had released before, and another source calls it "New Age-like." . . . Nils Lofgren has also been active these days, playing solo shows up and down the East Coast—"Man At The Top," always one of Lofgren's favorite Springsteen songs, was a recurring encore—and joining Jackson Browne on-stage for a few songs. . . . Garry Tallent is still residing in Nashville, and most recently played on eight of the ten tracks on the latest album from Texas singer-songwriter Robert Earl Keen.



The Mavericks' Raul Malo relaxes backstage with a copy of Backstreets.

Keen recently shared the bill with Joe Grushecky at the Playpen in Sayreville, NJ. . . . Tommy Sims has contributed to Amy Grant's albums in the past, and it seems he had a fairly large hand in her new one, *House of Love*. Sims played bass, programmed synth & drums, and co-wrote three of the songs: "The Power," "Helping Hand," and "Children of the World." . . . Bobby Bandiera has been on a "leave of absence" from the Jukes, hitting the road and the late night TV circuit with Dave Edmunds. Southside Johnny, currently at work on a new album, is waiting for Bandiera to wrap up the tour with Edmunds in November before heading into the studio. . . .

TILL I GET MY FILL

As the strike dragged on, baseball fans found some interesting ways to protest. Akron, Ohio radio station WJMP resolved to play nothing but "Take Me Out to the Ballgame," until the strike was over. Out of the many "straight" versions certainly available, the station chose to play the classic Springsteen parody version of the song from the Bruce Springstone record. Last we heard, they had played the song 31,000 times in a row—and counting. A commentator on National Public Radio, we're told, referred to it as "the worst version of the song ever recorded." Maybe they just don't get the joke, but 31,000 times is probably too much of even a good thing. . . . *Musician Magazine* is celebrating their 15 year anniversary with *The Jazz Musi-*

cian and *The Rock Musician*. The books collect some of the best interviews from *Musician's* first 15 years, with the latter reprinting one of Dave Marsh's talks with Springsteen. . . . Marsh himself has been vocal on-line, recently bringing fans up to date on the Kristen Ann Carr Fund. According to Marsh, the money raised at Bruce's June 1993 benefit concert was enough to fund two doctors at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer in New York, one to conduct sarcoma research and one to direct a support group for sarcoma patients. Fundraising has continued since Bruce's contribution, accounting for more than a quarter of million dollars in 1994. Correspondence and donations can be addressed to: KAC Fund 40 W. Elm St., Greenwich, CT, 06840. . . . If you want to join fans on-line, there's a new address for the Springsteen computer digest: luckytown-request@netcom.com. . . . When Billy Joel and Elton John played Giants Stadium earlier this year, Joel reportedly received some boos from the crowd. No, he didn't bring Terence Trent D'Arby on stage, he just played a bit of what he referred to as a state song, "Born to Run." Maybe the crowd was actually "Brooce"-ing, or it could be that no one wanted to hear "Born to Run" given the Joel treatment. Or maybe it was just the song—no one likes that one anyway, do they? . . . Down in Philly, legendary DJ and *Backstreets* pal Ed Sciaky is back on WMMR. You can catch him from 8 to 11 on Sunday nights, with a show called *Classic Cafe*. ➔

Rumors suggest early '95

Where's the new album?

Millions of rock fans around the world watched Kurt Loder interview Bruce Springsteen on the post-awards program at the recent MTV Video Music Awards. Springsteen had earlier performed "Streets of Philadelphia," and picked up an award (though he lost out on the big prize of the evening). Given Springsteen's dislike of interviews, it was surprising to find him sitting next to Loder on MTV.

Loder asked Bruce if he'd been working on a new record. "Yeah, I got a new record," Bruce said. "I got most of my songs right now....I'd like to get it out in the first four months of next year, maybe, if it works out." "Can we hold you to that?" Loder asked. "Uh, well, mildly so, I guess, you know," replied Springsteen. This was the first assurance from the man himself that a new record is close to completion. Prior to the interview, news about the record was leaking from band members, record company sources, and valets but not from Bruce.

But what most Springsteen fans didn't see on MTV in the U.S. was the short interview Bruce did with an MTV Europe reporter after the awards broadcast. When the journalist asked Springsteen essentially the same question Loder had posed, Springsteen replied, "I'll try to get the album out from between my fingers in the first four months of next year. I need a couple more songs and then to finish the recordings."

This suggests that Springsteen isn't completely done with writing the songs for the record (or at least he wasn't done by the beginning of September). His stated goal is to get it out of his hands by April, but the release date could be a couple of months after that. While fans were excited to hear Bruce talk positively about having a new record out soon, his hesitation was obvious.

Springsteen also told Loder that he'd "like to get records out

a little bit sooner, even though it's been a while since my last one, but I'd like to be able to get out and tour a little bit next year." Springsteen has said the same thing in almost every interview he's done over the past decade; as fans know all too well, the wait between albums has stayed in the three- to four-year range nonetheless.

Springsteen described his current recording process to Loder: "I have the songs, I've kind of demo-ed them, and usually what I do with the demos is some of them stand, and I might go back and put some musicians on them, or if they weren't right, I'll go back and recut them with a group of musicians, probably most of the guys that I worked with on the last tour. I'm not sure who else, so far."

Since the MTV Awards, it's known that Bruce spent some time in L.A. working on the new material. Reports suggested that recording included work on 14 new songs. As for musicians that have been involved, sources confirmed that Tommy Sims and Zach Alford have both played with Bruce on the album.

As for the actual release date of the record, sources within Sony in the U.S. say the album has been discussed but no firm release date had been set by early November. Those sources suggest a realistic release date would be May or June. There have been rumors of a spring tour, perhaps an acoustic tour.

Overseas, however, other Sony offices are more enthusiastic and optimistic about the impending release. A meeting in late October of Sony reps in Europe addressed the new album. The sales force was told that Bruce had recorded half the record, the rest would be finished in January, and it would be out in late April or early May.

There is, of course, no confirmation from Springsteen's management.

In the meantime there have been a series of rumors that have

entertained those waiting for the new record. In this age of computers and modems, rumors that used to take several months to make the rounds now spread instantly, and many times people mistakenly believe that reading something on a computer screen assures that it's valid. So here, for the sake of your entertainment, more than anything else, is the wildest rumor of the last three months. Again, we don't mean to suggest that this scenario is true, but it's outrageous enough to be almost comical and at least worth repeating.

Wild rumor #16943: Bruce's new album is titled *Come Out Tonight*, and includes songs like "Down at the Barside," "Stateside Sweat" and "Little Mama." This rumor started up in late September, swept through the computer networks and eventually was reported, as if it were fact, by a New York radio station and *Vox* magazine in England. *Vox* told the world "Springsteen's new album will be called *Come Out Tonight* (a reference to the rockin' 'Rosalita' from the second record). True or not, the demos are definitely finished, and the album, which may feature E Street Band legends Max Weinberg and Clarence Clemons, should be out early next year." The other song titles were "Where Are You Going," "Captain," "Perhaps," "All Night" and "Unnatural Forces." Believe it or not.... ➔

STOP PRESS:

In late-breaking news, a well-placed source has confirmed a release date for the new Springsteen album. According to the source, Bruce will be performing at this year's Grammy Awards, and his record will be released on the following Tuesday. What will certainly be considered a publicity coup for Sony is also great news for Springsteen fans. It means we'll see a new record *earlier* than expected, for a change—by March of 1995.

the backstreets jukebox

1. **Bruce Springsteen**
The Early Years
Early (2CD)

2. **R.E.M.**
Monster
Warner Bros. (CD)

3. **Liz Phair**
Whip-smart
Matador (CD)

4. **The Everly Brothers**
Heartaches & Harmonies
Rhino (4CD)

5. **Nirvana**
Roma
Kiss the Stone (CD)

6. **Todd Snider**
Songs for the Daily Planet
Margaritaville/MCA (CD)

7. **Bruce Springsteen**
The Ties That Bind
No label given (CD)

8. **Magnapop**
Hot Boxing
Priority (CD)

9. **Ween**
Chocolate and Cheese
Elektra (CD)

10. **Sebadoh**
Bakesale
Sub Pop (CD)

10
Monster
Discs to Play Today
and Everyday



Lopez back with the Rejects

Music and meditation on the Shore

By Robert Santelli

With Bruce Springsteen spending much of this past summer in New Jersey, it was only a matter of time before he began showing up in Jersey Shore clubs to socialize with friends and jam with area bands. In early July, Clarence Clemons performed at the Tradewinds, a trendy club in Sea Bright, not far from Springsteen's Rumson home. Many fans figured Bruce would make a cameo appearance with his former saxophonist, much like he did when Clemons played the Tradewinds last year.

Nearly 1800 people packed the club the night of the Clemons show, anxiously awaiting Springsteen's arrival. He never showed. Instead, Springsteen was in Red Bank, some eight miles west of Sea Bright, at the Count Basie Theater, where he watched Lyle Lovett give one of the best shows of the Shore's concert season. Springsteen wasn't the only star in the house; since the Red Bank date was Lovett's sole metropolitan area show, film director Robert Altman, actress Lauren Bacall, and other New York celebrities came to Red Bank to see Lovett in concert.

Bruce wound up having a busy summer on the Shore. The season's biggest and best Springsteen surprise occurred July 16 at the Stone Pony (see page 11 for a full report). Springsteen also performed at the Long Branch club, Marz, in late August, jumping onstage with Joe Grushecky and the Houserockers. Marz was one of the Shore's hottest clubs this past summer. Shore rocker John Eddie, plus promoters Bob Benjamin and Henry Vaccaro, Jr., put on a number of memorable shows there, including one that featured Nils Lofgren.

This summer, Vini Lopez, the original E Street Band drummer, returned to the Jersey Shore after living in Florida for much of 1993 and 1994. He promptly re-



Springsteen and Grushecky onstage at Marz, 8/20/94.

formed the Disco Rejects, his one-time popular bar band. The new version of the Rejects includes bass player Sam Cooper from the Acme Boogie Co., the old Castiles' keyboards player Bob Alfano, and Ricky DeSarno, who, back in the late '70s and early '80s, was one of the premier guitarists on the Jersey Shore, playing with the Lord Gunner Group, among other outfits.

Lopez currently lives in Ocean Grove, the picturesque town south of Asbury Park. According to the drummer, "the band is playing more covers than originals these days, but we'll be working in some of our own things once we get used to playing with each other again." Lopez added that, as in the past, the Disco Rejects will add into their set a few Springsteen rejects from the Steel Mill era. In addition to playing with the E Street Band, Lopez was Steel Mill's drummer, a Springsteen band that preceded the E Street Band in the late '60s.

"I always get asked if we're gonna do some Steel Mill stuff," continued Lopez. "I guess it's just a matter of time before we do 'Cowboys of the Sea' or 'Goin'

Back to Georgia.' Those are two songs I really enjoy playing."

In early June many Shore musicians played at the Seventh Annual Jersey Shore Jazz & Blues Festival at Riverfest in Red Bank's Marine Park. A postcard-perfect weekend with sunny skies and mild temperatures attracted some 50,000 music fans to the free festival. Each year the Jersey Shore Jazz & Blues Foundation presents a Lifetime Achievement Award to an outstanding New Jersey jazz or blues musician. This year's award went to jazz guitarist Bucky Pizzarelli. Previous winners include another legendary jazz guitarist, Tal Farlow, and gospel singer Cissy Houston, the mother of Whitney Houston.

Longtime fans of Bill Chin-nock will want to add Chin-nock's classic *Dime Store Heroes* to their CD collection. The album has been long out-of-print on vinyl, but Chin-nock recently transferred the music onto disc. *Dime Store Heroes*, which contains such Jersey gems as "Ironbound" and the title track, recall Chin-nock in his raucous rhythm & blues days, when his music embodied all the elements of

what would become known as the Jersey Shore sound. The CD is only available from selected outlets, including the Strawberries record chain.

In a recent interview, Chin-nock said he hoped one day to re-release his late '70s *Badlands* album, which in the opinion of many Chin-nock fans, is even better than *Dime Store Heroes*. But, according to Chin-nock, he has been unable to secure the rights from Atlantic Records, the label that released the album the first time around. "I wish I could get the chance to put *Badlands* out on CD," explained Chin-nock. "I always have people coming up to me and asking if it's available. It really hurts me to tell them that it's not."

Asbury Park has been called many things, but one thing it's never been called is a spiritual retreat. That might change if the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi has his way. Last summer the former spiritual advisor to the Beatles bought Asbury Park's oldest hotel, the Berkeley-Carteret, and opened two transcendental meditation schools and a holistic health center in it. The hotel is located just a couple of blocks north of the Stone Pony.

In recent years, Asbury Park has tried to jump-start its depressed economy by inviting developers to submit plans to city hall. A drive along the city's oceanfront reveals half-built hotels and cleared land, but little else. Poor management has stifled any Asbury Park renaissance. To make matters worse, in March, the then-mayor of the city, Dennis Buckley, was arrested for cocaine possession in a local bar and forced to resign.

"If they believe meditation will save this town, let them do it wherever they want," Asbury Park resident Danielle Richards told the *New York Times* in July when the Maharishi story broke. "Asbury has tried everything else, so why not give these Maharishi guys a chance?"

She has a point. ➔

All-star jam for the Pony's 20th

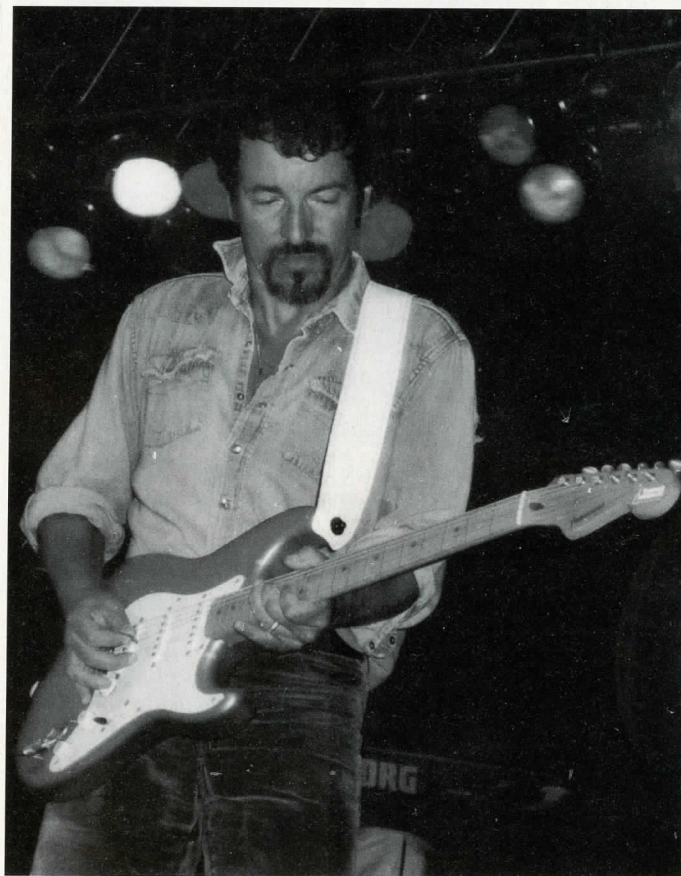
The Stone Pony's birthday bash

By Robert Santelli

It was billed as the Stone Pony's 20th anniversary concert, but Southside Johnny's mid-July show at the legendary rock club was really much more than that. The event featured Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes, the Stone Pony's original house band, in one of their best performances on the Jersey Shore in years. But the night also saw surprise appearances by Bruce Springsteen, Jon Bon Jovi, Patti Scialfa, and Max Weinberg, thus making the concert as much a celebration of Asbury Park's rich rock history as it was an anniversary party for the city's flagship music club.

The concert actually took place in the Stone Pony Big Top, the large tent that's located next to the club on Asbury Park's Ocean Ave., a stone's throw from the beach. Unfortunately, there was no cool, salty breeze blowing off the water that night. With temperatures outside in the mid-80s and humidity in the 90 percent range, fans stood baking in the oven-like tent waiting for the concert to start. Yet, many of the more than 1600 sweat-soaked people at the show seemed to forget all about the oppressive concert conditions once the music began. From the moment Southside took the stage and launched into "All Night Long," to the final showstopper, "Havin' a Party" more than two and a half hours later, the music was as hot as the people listening and dancing to it.

Southside seemed to relish the heat, even adding to it with his feverish outpouring of Jersey-style rock 'n' roll energy. Instead of showcasing new material (at the time of the concert Southside and guitarist Bobby Bandiera reportedly had been writing new songs for an upcoming Jukes album), Southside used the occasion to perform a cross-section of classic songs from the Jukes' repertoire. After all, the Jukes, who began as a band 20 years



ago, were also celebrating an anniversary that night.

In both the band's and the Stone Pony's honor, Southside sang a number of songs that, lyrically, deal with Asbury Park in one way or another. According to Southside, "Love on the Wrong Side of Town," "When You Dance," and "I Don't Want to Go Home" all have Asbury Park themes. These songs and many of the other early chestnuts Johnny and the band performed were written by Little Steven Van Zandt, the only big-name former Shore rocker not at the Stone Pony Big Top for the concert celebration. Southside said after the show that Van Zandt was unable to perform because he was recording a new album and couldn't get away from the studio.

Even though Van Zandt, a founding member of the Jukes along with Southside all those

years ago, was not present, Southside sang Van Zandt's songs with a vitality and gusto that in many ways was a tribute to one of the Shore's rock icons. Phrasing lyrics to accent the most emotional parts of the songs and striving to reach each tune's inner soul, Southside made it particularly easy to recall the days when Asbury Park and the Stone Pony were major hubs of rock 'n' roll on the East Coast.

Even before the big stars appeared onstage, Southside was generous with the spotlight. More than once he featured the sizzling solos of Jukes' guitarist Bobby Bandiera as well as Ritchie "La Bamba" Rosenberg's bellowing trombone runs. La Bamba, now a member of Max Weinberg's *Late Night* band, played the entire show as the former Juke he once was. Such powerful performances by the two key members of the group only drove South-

side to greater heights. On "The Fever," for instance, both Southside's voice and harmonica playing were impeccable, despite the steady streams of sweat rolling down his face. And on "This Time It's For Real," he belted out the words as if his reputation as a great blue-eyed soul singer rested on a flawless delivery of them.

It seemed as if the show couldn't possibly get better, but it did, of course, once the "honorary Jukes" came out onstage. First Max Weinberg, then Springsteen and Bon Jovi, and finally Patti Scialfa made their surprise appearances, much to the roaring approval of the crowd. Outside the Stone Pony Big Top, fans unable to get into the sold-out show listened to the music, even if they couldn't watch it being performed. Many of them danced in the street, clogging traffic in the process.

The enlarged version of the Jukes cut into "I Played the Fool," followed by a truly wicked version of "Funky Broadway" that featured a soaring Springsteen guitar solo. Springsteen next hushed the crowd with a touching offering of "Jersey Girl," followed by Jon Bon Jovi's high-flying version of "I've Been Working Too Hard," a song he recorded with Johnny and the Jukes on the band's last album, *Better Days*.

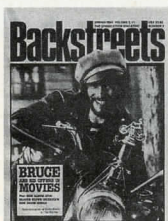
By the time Southside called for his trademark tune, "Havin' a Party," it was clear that there was little else he or his band could give to the anniversary celebration. The affair had turned into an old-fashioned Stone Pony rave-up, the kind veteran fans of the Asbury club could routinely catch in the mid-'70s when Southside, Springsteen, members of the Jukes and the E Street Band called the Pony home.

"Man, this night was like a dream come true," said one fan, whose salt-and-pepper hair and growing bald spot betrayed his age. "It's been a long time since I've heard anything like that at this club." 🍷

Backstreets Backissues



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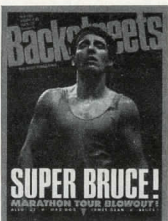
#9 Bruce in the movies; Beaver Brown; Boss books.....\$6



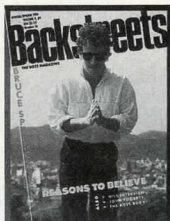
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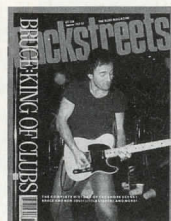
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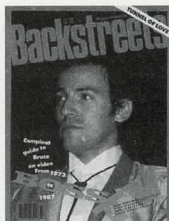
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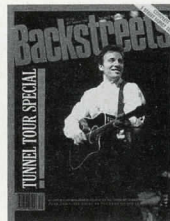
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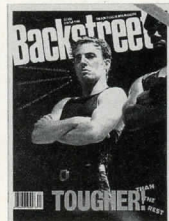
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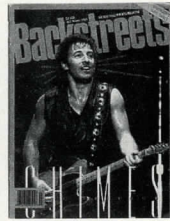
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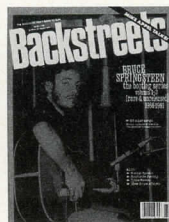
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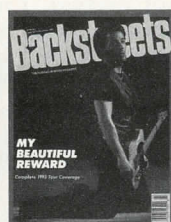
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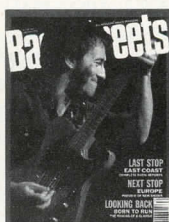
#38 Interviews: Max, Southside Johnny, Little Steven.....\$5



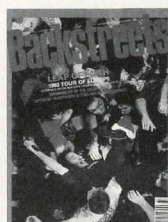
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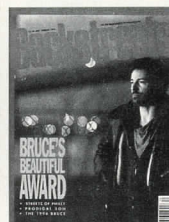
#42 Tour '92: St. Louis through Lexington; Bruce inducts CCR....\$5



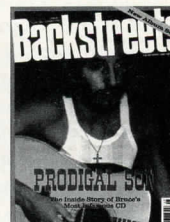
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Bruce, American style

Bruce and Joe rock the house

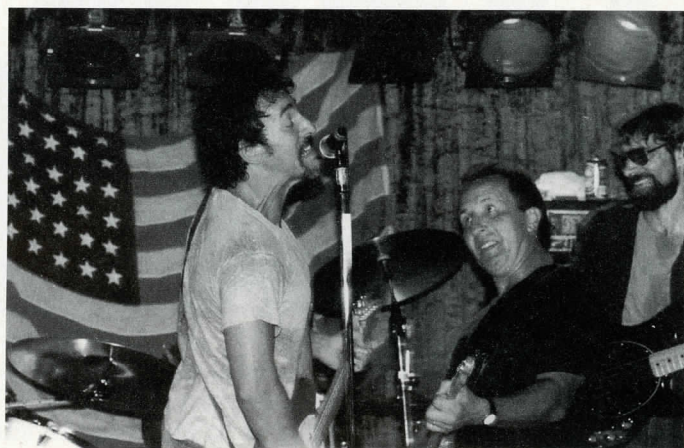
LEWIS BLOOM PHOTO

After reports of Bruce Springsteen's studio collaboration with Joe Grushecky had circulated for months, the two rockers finally performed together at a small club. Bruce has been known to pull Grushecky onstage when he plays Pittsburgh, home of the Houserockers, and this time Grushecky was on Springsteen's home turf. On Saturday, August 20, Bruce joined Grushecky and the Houserockers at the Long Branch club, Marz, where the band was playing as part of the American Style series. The result was an hour and a half of mean guitar, plenty of broken strings, and many more Springsteen songs at a club show than anyone has come to expect.

Along with the band, Springsteen played an astounding number of both new and old songs from his own repertoire, as well as a series of rock standards in which he and Grushecky traded off on vocals. While the show saw no new Springsteen songs, it did include two new Grushecky songs from the album that Springsteen is producing. After opening with "Lucky Town" and "Darkness on the Edge of Town," they went into "Chain Smokin'," a new Grushecky song, followed by "(There'll) Never Be Enough Time." The latter is actually an old song written by Grushecky, but he and Bruce have reworked it for the new record. The set also included "Atlantic City," "Living Proof," and "Glory Days."

John Eddie came out to take lead vocals on "Around and Around" during the encores, and the final surprise of the evening was the appearance of Dion DiMucci. Dion had performed at Club Bene in Sayreville earlier that night, and he appeared onstage at the end of the Marz show for "The Wanderer."

The night was one of Bruce's hottest gigs and certainly his least spontaneous show of the summer—he even showed up at the club that afternoon to do a full soundcheck. Bruce and the



Grushecky steps back to let the Boss take the lead.

band ran through two numbers at soundcheck that weren't performed that evening: "Better Days" and "Born on the Bayou." Apparently, the band was as taken with the Boss as the crowd was, as Houserocker Bill Toms went on to tell Pennsylvania's *Rock N' Roll Reporter*: "Just that one gig we played, you come away with so much information... When a guy like that talks, you just try to take in as much as you can. He's very much a perfectionist. He's the real thing.... As far as his personality is concerned, he's real down to earth. I mean, when he came to the club, he pulled up on his Harley. He didn't have a Michael Jackson entourage or anything. He was by himself."

Less than a week later, Springsteen played again at Classics Cafe in Westwood, NJ. Playing to a tiny crowd of around 40 people, Bruce joined a local band and handled guitar on five classic covers, closing out his surprise set with lead vocals on "Boom Boom." The club, formerly Arthur's, has been host to Bruce before, back in the days of *Born in the U.S.A.* Recalling those days of yore, the other guest onstage was drummer Max Weinberg. Weinberg also backed Springsteen in September for the MTV Music Awards performance.

On September 20, Springsteen once again joined John Fogerty at the House of Blues in

L.A. Bruce reportedly sat upstairs and watched most of the show—Fogerty's first full-length concert appearance in eight years—but was finally moved to jump onstage for an encore performance of "In the Midnight Hour." This marks Fogerty's third L.A. performance in a row at which he jammed with Springsteen. The concert was a benefit for the Stop Cancer Foundation.

Springsteen resurfaced for a busy weekend one month later, starting off at Bob Dylan's final show in New York on October 20. Forming a remarkable rock 'n' roll triumvirate, Springsteen joined Dylan and Neil Young for encores of "Rainy Day Women" and "Highway 61 Revisited."

Finally, the following night, Springsteen performed with Marshall Crenshaw, Greg Kihn, and Elliott Murphy at the Playpen, a Sayreville, NJ club that had just become the new host to the American Style series. Crenshaw, Kihn, and Murphy had all performed solo sets, followed by a set by John Eddie and his band. Springsteen then joined Eddie and his band onstage, as did the three other artists, jamming together on five songs. The ensemble kicked things off with "Hey Tonight," a CCR original, and a highlight was Springsteen's merciful rescue of a faltering "Bang a Gong," transforming it into "Route 66" before finally raising the roof with "Gloria." ➔

BRUCE DISPELS THE SUMMERTIME BLUES

•7/16/94

I Played the Fool
Funky Broadway
Land of 1000 Dances
It's Been a Long Time
Jersey Girl
Working Too Hard
Havin' a Party
Stone Pony Big Top, Asbury Park, NJ

•8/20/94 Soundcheck

Lucky Town
Better Days
Atlantic City
Living Proof
Darkness
Born on the Bayou
Marz, Long Branch, NJ

•8/20/94

Lucky Town
Darkness
Chain Smokin'
Never Be Enough Time
Brown-Eyed Girl
Mustang Sally
Atlantic City
Do Wah Diddy Diddy
Living Proof
Glory Days
Around and Around
Bama Lama Bama Loo
The Wanderer/Kansas City
Marz, Long Branch, NJ

•8/26/94

In the Midnight Hour
Slow Down
Twist and Shout
Hippy Hippy Shake
Boom Boom
Classics Cafe, Westwood, NJ

•9/8/94

Streets of Philadelphia
MTV Music Awards, NY, NY

•9/20/94

In the Midnight Hour
House of Blues, Los Angeles, CA

•10/21/94

Rainy Day Women
Highway 61 Revisited
Irving Plaza, NY, NY

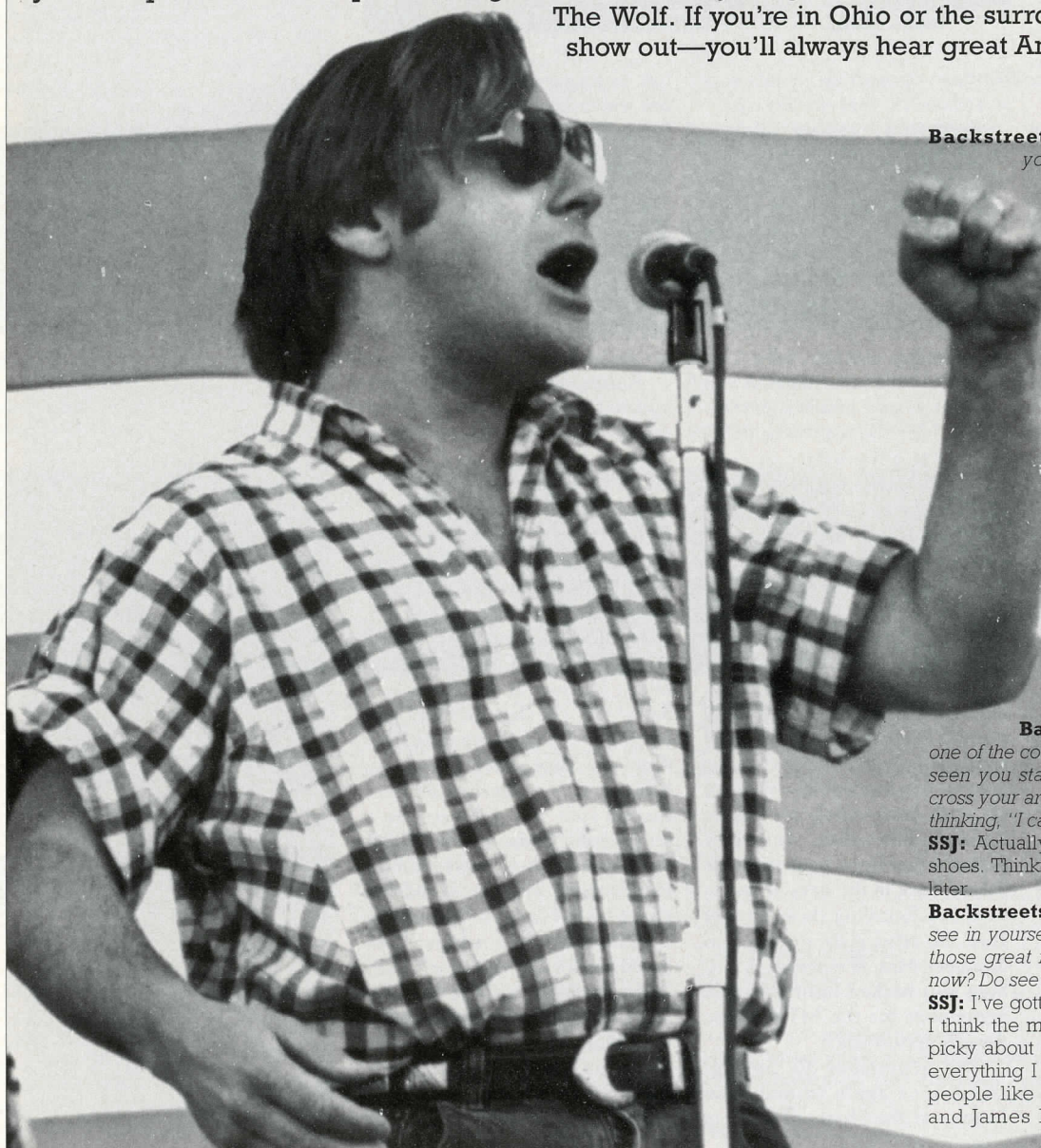
•10/22/94

Hey Tonight
Suspicious Minds
Bang a Gong (Get it On)
Route 66
Gloria
The Playpen, Sayreville, NJ

AMERICA'S OFFICIAL PARTYMEISTER

Checking in with **SOUTHSIDE JOHNNY** By **Cornel Bogdan**

Over the years *Backstreets* has done numerous interviews with Southside Johnny Lyon but it's been a long time since we updated fans on John's current whereabouts. While those on the East Coast of the U.S. probably saw the Jukes touring during the past year, Southside fans in the rest of the world have not been so lucky. John has been doing some work on a new album so when he rolled through Akron, Ohio this summer, *Backstreets* correspondent Cornel Bogdan spent some time interviewing the head Juke to update us on his plans. Bogdan is also a disc jockey on station WNCD FM, also called CD102, The Wolf. If you're in Ohio or the surrounding area, check his show out—you'll always hear great American rock 'n' roll.



Backstreets: For a number of years now, you've been America's official Partymeister. It's got to be a drag—always a party and you've always got to work. Isn't there a time when you want to chill out and enjoy the crowd? Or is the stage the place you like to work the best?

Southside Johnny: Well the stage is the safest place to do that. I like to say that I have one of the best jobs of anyone. I get to do what I like to do. And it's real loud up there, the way I like it. My neighbors always complain that I play music too loud. And I also get to watch everyone else have a good time. It's not so bad. The one thing I do miss is watching the band. One day I'd like to sit in the audience and watch the band play onstage, but I don't know how I'm going to do that.

Backstreets: But that's always been one of the coolest parts of your shows, when I've seen you stand over on the side of the stage, cross your arms and look at the band like you're thinking, "I can't believe this band is this good."

SSJ: Actually, I'm assessing fines. Un-shined shoes. Thinking of bad notes to be handed out later.

Backstreets: What's the biggest change you see in yourself as an artist from the '70s and all those great records, and yourself as a person now? Do see personal change in yourself?

SSJ: I've gotten a lot older. I still enjoy singing. I think the main thing is that I've always been picky about material. I've always tried to give everything I can onstage. I grew up watching people like Big Joe Turner and Ray Charles and James Brown and B.B. King, and they

always gave everything. It's still the same way. I don't hold back. I would have thought by this time I would have calmed down onstage and I'd sit on a stool with a little sweater and sing a lot of ballads. But that hasn't happened yet.

Backstreets: *If that ever happens I think they'll be putting you in a box the next day. It's funny how some critics, talking about your last release, Better Days, said that it marked a "strong comeback" for Southside Johnny. I never knew you went away. What did you think about all the comeback statements that were heard throughout the music industry?*

SSJ: That album was a harkening back to *Hearts of Stone* and the first three albums with Steven. I've been touring for such a long time, that I always know where I am and that I'm working all the time. They always say that about everybody. Unless you have, like Chrissie Hynde, taken a few years off, there's no way to do this. You never know what's going to work and what's not going to work. You just do what you can and see what happens. There are people who make albums every year, and I make albums...whenever I can.

Backstreets: *How did "It's Been A Long Time," your collaboration with Bruce and Little Steven, come about?*

SSJ: I saw Steven when we did our big outdoor show, at the Garden State Arts Center, in 1990 I guess it was, and every year I try to do something different there so that people don't see the same old show. That year, there were a number of old Jukes who came by, who I hadn't seen in a number of years. So I had the idea of asking the old Jukes to come by, they all live in the area. I had to ask Steven and Jon Bon Jovi, who is an honorary Juke when he minds his Ps and Qs. And they all came by. And Steven and I had such a great time that we had lunch a little later and decided to do something together.

For a number of years, Steven and I would talk about music and we were on a lot of different wavelengths at times. But that year he was listening to a lot of Bobby Blue Band and a lot of old blues and R&B and so was I. And when we talked and played each other tapes, we realized we had a lot of the same songs on the tapes. It seemed like the right time to do it.

Backstreets: *Let's go back to Hearts of Stone, an album that made Rolling Stone's list of all-time greats, a release I always go back to. At the time did you know that this release would hold up so well over the years?*

SSJ: It's tough for me to say. I liked the album when we were doing it. We made almost a whole album before we made *Hearts of Stone* and that wasn't going right. The material wasn't right. Steven and I talked about it. It was good stuff but it wasn't getting us. I had to go on tour so I made *Hearts of Stone* in between touring. I'd get off the bus in New York City and I'd sleep on this little couch in this studio in Manhattan and Steven would be there 24 hours a day. I would wake up, go in and sing, sit and listen, go back in and sing, be there for 15 hours and then the bus would pick me up and we'd go away again for another four or five days. So I didn't know what was going on with the album.

The main thing was we really wanted to make an emotional statement on that album. It was very difficult. It was a hard album to make. But I was very happy with the way it came out.

Backstreets: *What have you been writing*

about these days? I know you're constantly working on new material.

SSJ: Some of the stuff I'm writing is about the changes going on, about me getting older. But there's a lot of interpersonal relationship fantasies about other people, not me. A lot of it is very personal and a lot is about stuff, weird stuff, happening to other people in other places. I don't know how the two are going to mix—it's going to be interesting.

I've also gotten, for once in my life, I've actually gotten decent songs in the mail. Delbert McClinton, he's an old friend of mine down in Nashville, he sent me a couple of songs that were really up tempo fun songs and I'm really leaning towards doing those too.

Backstreets: *You've always been known as a person who listens to lots of other music for inspiration. Are you getting any ideas from some of the newer stuff that's out today?*

SSJ: I do. Some of the stuff I've been listening to lately is Lucinda Williams. I get really juiced up by her writing. She's a great writer. She can be a tad depressing at times but I really like that. There's still some fun to be had out there, and I'm trying to incorporate some of that, too. It's been a long time for me, to quote the song, and it does get grueling, and you can write some songs that tend to be down, and ask "why am I doing this so hard." But for the most part I'm trying to find some songs that are fun because I still like my life. For another week anyway.

Backstreets: *What else have you been listening to?*

SSJ: I've been listening to a lot of blues. Rhino sent me their Bluesmasters series and I've gotten some of the Chicago Chess stuff in the mail, so that will be an influence. But like I said, Lucinda Williams and Mary Chapin Carpenter, Richard Thompson. The newest Elvis Costello album is great.

Backstreets: *You made quite a change with the release of your album Slow Dance. It was a shift from the party sound into romantic ballads. What made you make that change?*

SSJ: I turned around one day and realized that I was crazy in love with my wife and I realized we do a lot of the things I talk about on that album. Like dancing in the kitchen. After all these years there's still a connection and I thought, a lot of times romance is sloughed off or treated just on the surface in music. So I wanted to write about how, for me, romance is difficult to maintain, but when you do maintain it over a number of years, how deep it really goes. And that's what a lot of the songs on that album are really about. I didn't do it with the Jukes because this was a really personal statement and I wanted to try to make it myself.

Backstreets: *What's the song "Little Calcutta" about? What was your inspiration for that one?*

SSJ: During that period, I was writing a lot of the songs on *Slow Dance* and I was going into the city to work with a guy named Steve Skinner, writing and making demos. And I would

take the bus into Manhattan, into Port Authority. And it was February and very cold and all the homeless, thousands of them, were in Port Authority sleeping on cardboard and under old clothes. And there was this one exit, this little doorway, that goes down to the subway there, and it was taken over by crack addicts. The police wouldn't let you go in there at 8 or 9 o'clock at night. Even trains wouldn't stop there. It was one of those things where you saw the real breakdown of society and it just kind of forced that song out of me.

Backstreets: *Sounds like Kurt Russell in Escape From New York.*

SSJ: It was very much like that. One day some German tourists had gotten off the subway and these people had taken everything from them



Southside at the Stone Pony's 20th anniversary, 7/16/94

and stabbed them, and taken their shoes, and everything. And the cops couldn't do anything because there were three or four hundred of them—psychopaths down there with weapons and they couldn't do anything about it.

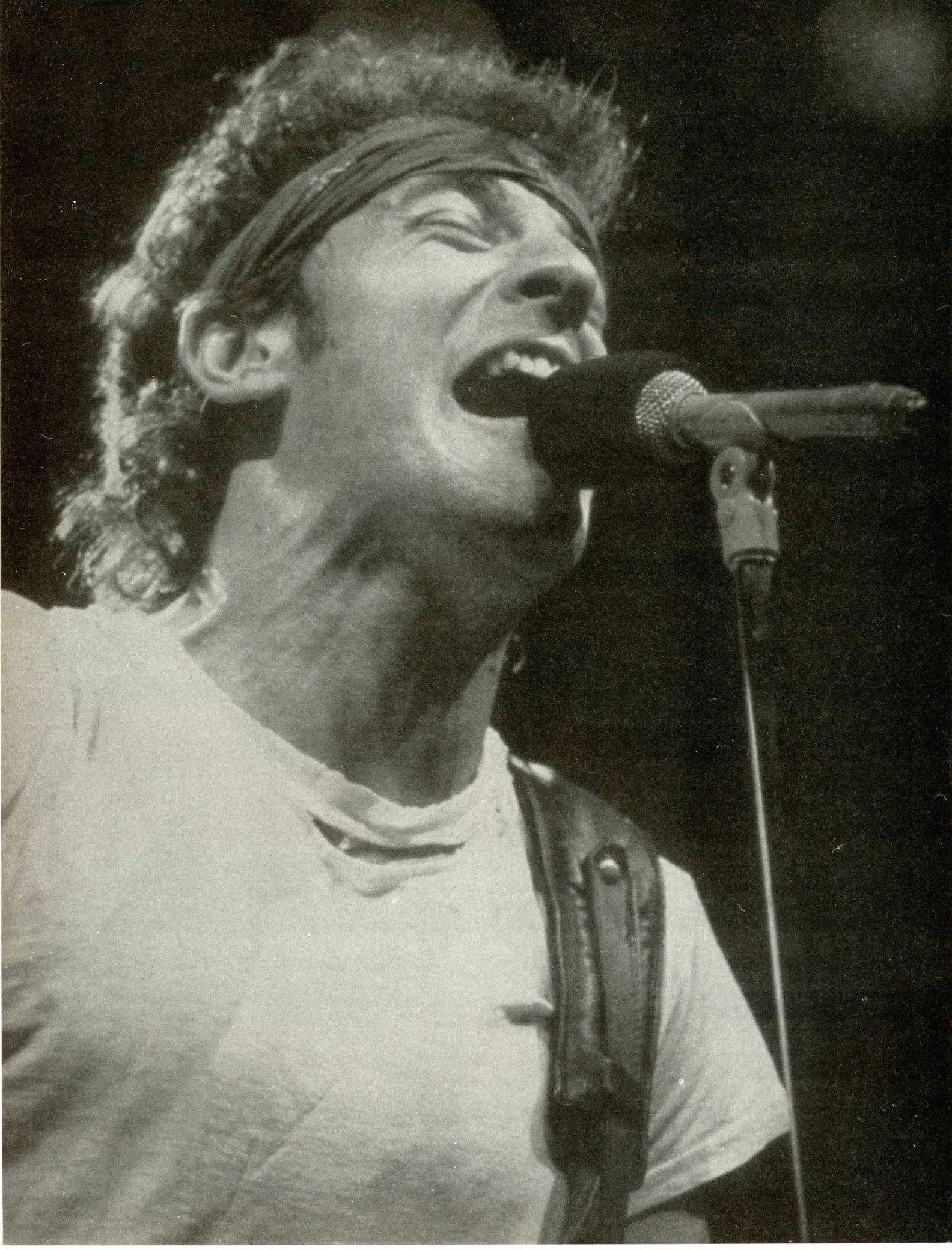
Backstreets: *Tell me at least one Akron or Youngstown story.*

SSJ: I remember the first time we played Youngstown. We had played Cleveland once or twice, and we were playing at the Agora there. So we met these motorcycle guys who said, "We'll give you a ride to Youngstown," and they had a great big long Cadillac convertible. It was old but a beautiful car. So I sat in the back and there were a million guys in the car, so I sat up on the boot, where the convertible tucks in. And the police, of course, stopped us, and took the guy's license and weren't going to let him drive the car.

So I'm halfway between Cleveland and Youngstown and I've got a show in about an hour and the police are checking my ID. And luckily some other people came by and gave me a ride because otherwise I would have missed the show.

Backstreets: *And you know, that car brings me to work every day! Cleveland has always been one of your biggest cities.*

SSJ: Cleveland, and actually the whole Ohio area, has always been great for us. I think it's because a lot of Ohio is not unlike a lot of New Jersey. It's blue class, it has respect for working people. There's not a lot of elitism in Ohio, there's certainly not any in New Jersey, although they try sometimes. We feel very at home there and I know that sounds like a very rote statement, but the fact is that very first time we played there we had a great time and it hasn't stopped. 🐾



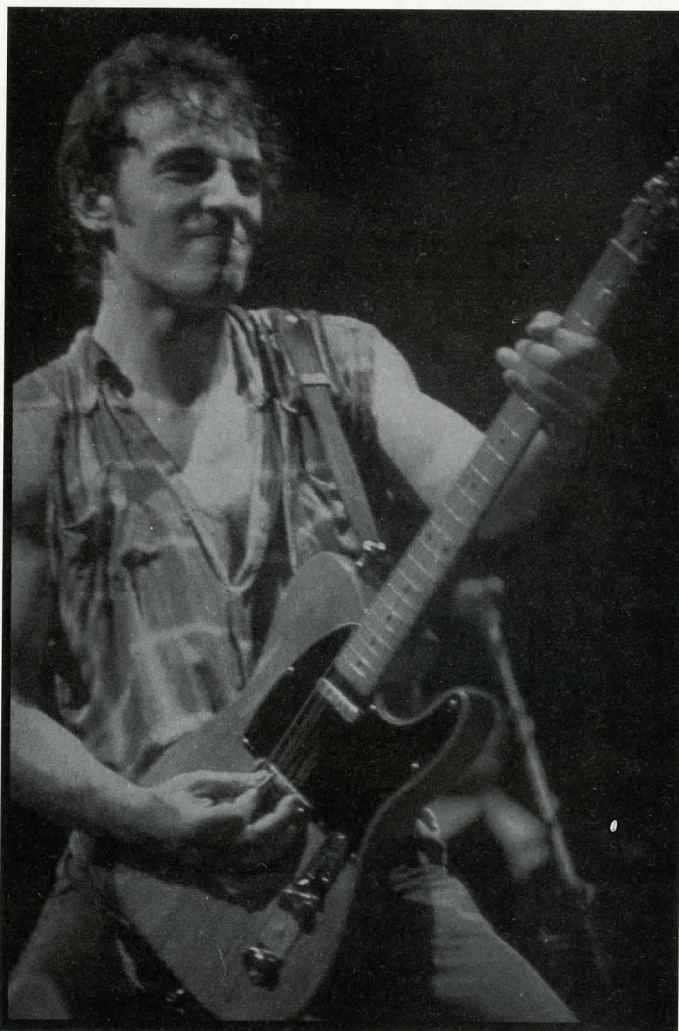
TEN YEARS BURNING DOWN THE ROAD

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ BY JON PHILLIPS ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

1984 is a dividing line in a fan's history of Bruce Springsteen. It was the year that Bruce Tramps lost their man to the masses. It was the beginning of a three-year odyssey of hit singles, *Entertainment Tonight* interviews, magazine covers, sports stadiums, misinterpreted lyrics, political attempts at co-option, \$11 million dollar endorsement offers, and lip-synced videos. Longtime fans, industry moguls, and the rest of the world were ill-prepared for the explosion. Record store managers who were predicting in *Billboard* magazine the demise of *Born in the U.S.A.* at the hands of the Jacksons' *Victory* album found themselves relegated to stockboy status. Loyal fans tolerated the fury until 1987 when *Tunnel of Love* was released, the world let go of Springsteen, and they got Bruce back.

Judging from *Backstreets* readers' polls and letters to the magazine, those three years, May 1984 (with the release of "Dancing in the Dark") to September 1987 (with the release of "Brilliant Disguise"), comprised the Dark Times in the history of Bruce Springsteen, at least to many of the hardcore (the performance of "57 Channels" on *Saturday Night Live* notwithstanding.) For me, those three years represent the peak of my history with Bruce. I was 16, and I was one of the first on the bandwagon.

But a big difference between myself and many of the 16 million people who bought that album was that I never abandoned the cause; my obsession has not faded. My discussions about Springsteen have brought me in contact with a lot of different types of fans, including some who were following



him long before any record company advance. To those fans, I remain a staunch defender of the *Born in the U.S.A.* album and era, although it can be a daunting task. That defense is based mainly on what I and others experienced as young, first-time Springsteen fans, but also on what I imagine it was like as a long-time fan listening to the latest work from Springsteen. It's a defense I'd like to offer now.

Each album from Springsteen has always contained both stories that capture his personal experience and commentaries on the world in which he lives. The personal statement is often the most rewarding part for Springsteen fans, as the latest chapter in a story they've followed for years. Understanding and appreciating the relationship between Springsteen's personal journey and his music adds an important richness to his work. "Living Proof" is a powerful song not only because it describes a set of events and universal emo-

tions so vividly, but also because the song tells how, after years of tortured writing that he shared with his audience, Springsteen may have found some sense of peace. The understanding of the man lends a new dimension to the music. So a first step in appreciating that 1984-1985 era is understanding the statement about Springsteen's life that *BUSA* made.

As discussed in Dave Marsh's *Glory Days*, the period after *The River* tour was a lonely, isolated time for Springsteen. The artistic product of this loneliness was the *Nebraska* album, its songs and material reflecting his emotional state. It was a mes-

IN DEFENSE OF *BORN IN THE U.S.A.*

sage of cynicism, isolation, and resignation—an album that was recorded alone and was meant to be listened to alone. Of all the first-person songs on the album, I think it is “Reason to

THE BEST ROCK AND ROLL MUSIC IS A COMBINATION OF HOPE AND DESPAIR

Believe” where Springsteen’s own state of mind is most clearly heard. For someone who always believed in the power of music to affect thoughts and lives to be reduced to such a dark view is a bleak statement on the changes he had undergone.

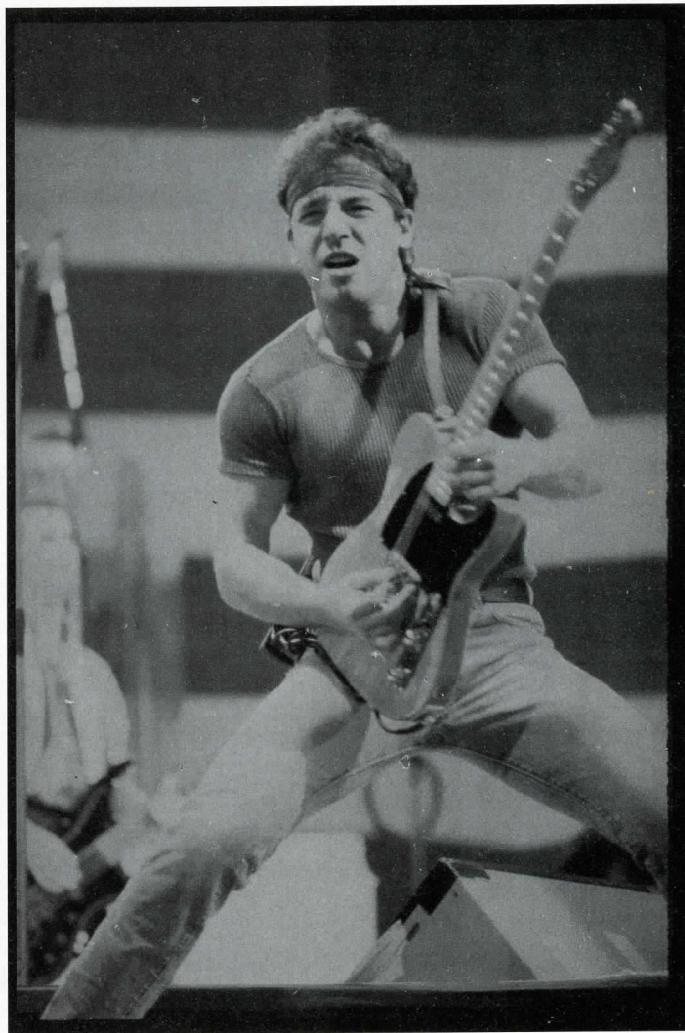
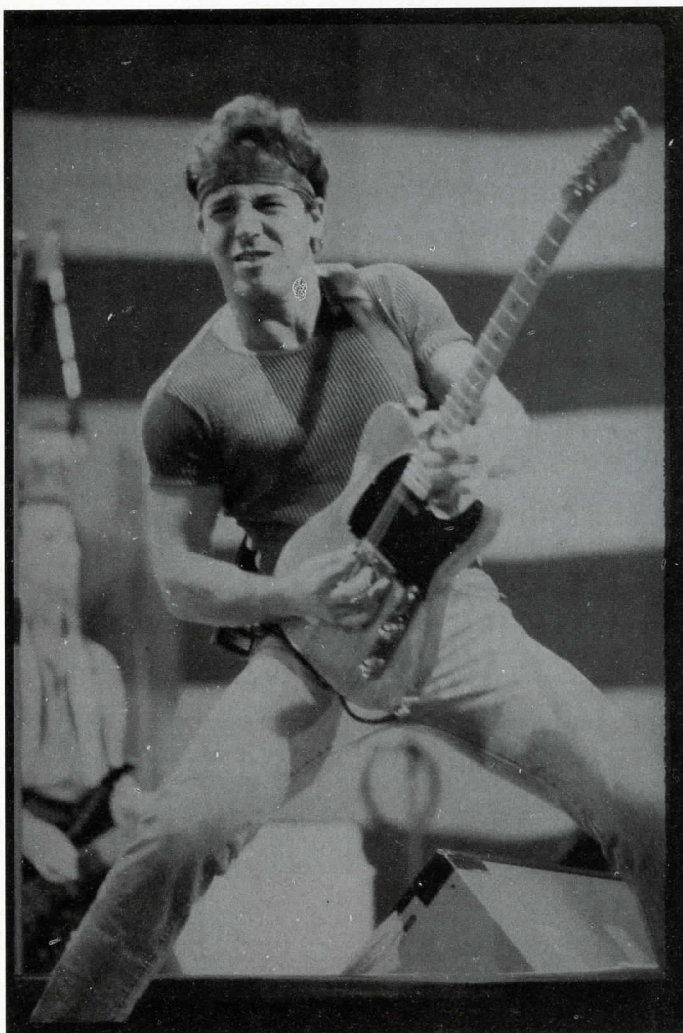
One of the stories underlying *Born in the U.S.A.* is that of a man traveling from isolation back to the community. The album represents Springsteen’s attempt to reconnect with the world—to find and touch a larger community through his work than he ever had before. It was a conscious decision to reject that dark view he expressed in *Nebraska* and to find and pass on some new sense of faith. Springsteen was not only ready to deliver a message, but to do so to the widest audience possible. This would mean producing an album with a great

pop radio sound, including a number of potential singles, and meeting the media onslaught head-on. On tour in 1988, before singing “Born to Run” at every concert, Springsteen would talk about the importance of finding a connection in the world. That search, he said, is one of the reasons he records and tours. Moving from *Nebraska* to *Born in the U.S.A.*, Springsteen was looking to make a strong connection.

Everything about the *Born in the U.S.A.* album captures this sense of community. Springsteen was recording with the E Street Band again, and the live interplay between he, Clarence, and Little Steven is heard throughout the album. That sound reflects that the album was created by a *group* and that the music was meant to be listened to in groups. There were songs to dance to, songs to laugh to, and songs to pump your fist to. The music was designed to appeal to a wide range of people and to draw them together.

In fact the communal message of the album is contained as much or more in the music than the lyrics. On *Born in the U.S.A.* there is a strong contrast and tension between these two components. Previous efforts from Springsteen had matched the two more closely: the buoyant, mythic songs of *Born to Run* match music to lyrics; the determined bitterness of *Darkness On the Edge of Town*, following years of lawsuits and artistic restrictions, matches music and lyrics; and the two never match more closely than on *Nebraska*. The lyrical content on *BUSA* is often personal and dark, but the music searches for something different.

LAWRENCE KIRSCH PHOTOS



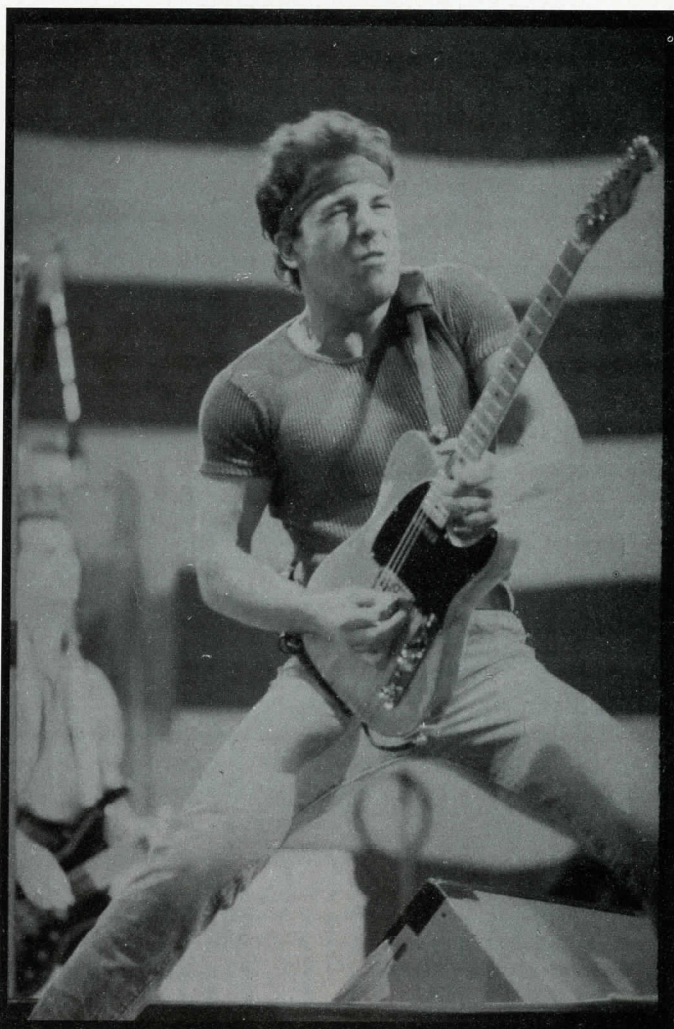
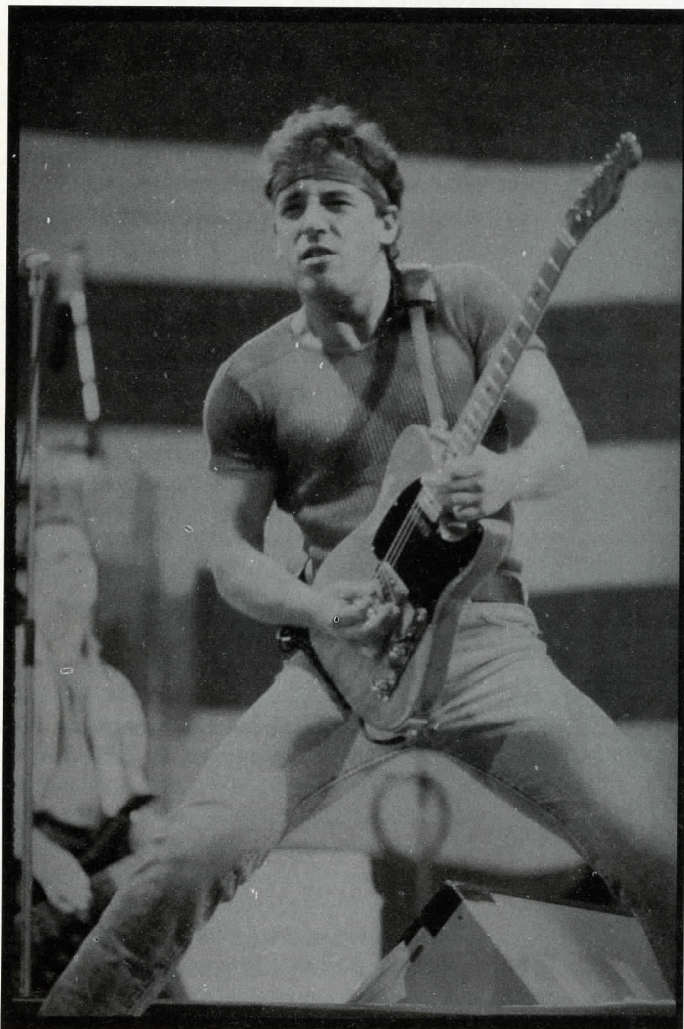
The most striking example is on what may be the most personal song on the album, "Dancing in the Dark." The lyrics reflect the symptoms of that 1981-1984 time period for Springsteen—the isolation, boredom, and loneliness. If the music had not been given the "Real World" treatment, this might have felt like a more personal song for long-time Springsteen fans and would have received greater "true fan" acceptance. A quiet acoustic song with some bells in the background would have been more of what they expected. But the music Springsteen chose was forward-looking. In "Dancing in the Dark," the lyrics pose the problem of loneliness, but the music itself offers the solution. That solution is to dance, move, smile with those around you: to make that connection. The best rock and roll music is a combination of hope and despair—the frenzied, unspoken acknowledgment of pain between and among all those who listen to the music. A new faith is the result. Even if the songs are about loneliness and despair, the recognition that these are universal emotions, that everyone feels this way, creates its own spiritually cleansing effect. Springsteen's music and concerts have always recognized and been based on this phenomenon, and *Born in the U.S.A.* was no exception.

Born in the U.S.A. is not only the story of Springsteen's personal journey out of isolation, but the story of the world which he was entering. As Springsteen fully rejoined the community, he realized he also had a responsibility to criticize and improve it. *Born in the U.S.A.* is the result of Springsteen's

growing politicization. His forays into politics had been guarded before; while he was willing to play at the MUSE concerts, he was not ready to make an official statement on nuclear power. Springsteen's political awakening continued with his work with Vietnam Veterans and the 1981 benefit show in Los Angeles. This growing awareness was a step towards writing *Born in the U.S.A.*'s title track. His reading of *Woody Guthrie: A Life*, to which he referred in concert, must have also prodded him to think about the role of the nation and his role and responsibilities as a popular artist. The book-ends of the album, "Born in the U.S.A." and "My Home-

IN "DANCING IN THE DARK," THE LYRICS POSE THE PROBLEM OF LONELINESS, BUT THE MUSIC ITSELF OFFERS THE SOLUTION.

town," are strong commentaries on the American experience, and these were supplemented with even stronger political statements out on tour. This was the time of great myths in America, and Springsteen's artistry was in direct response to those myths. In fact, *Born in the U.S.A.* was a direct response

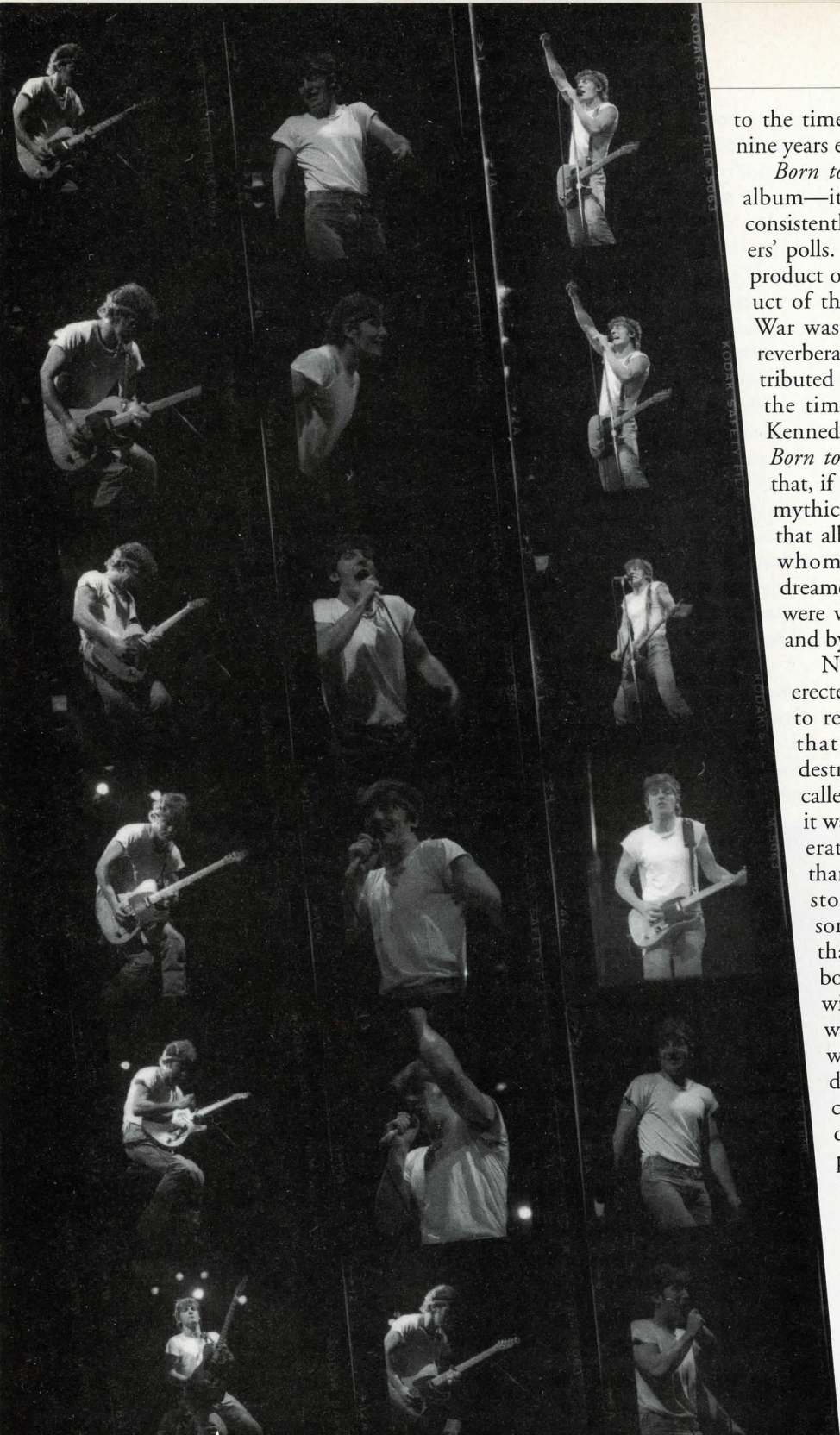


to the times, just as fan-favorite *Born to Run* was some nine years earlier.

Born to Run is the quintessential Bruce Springsteen album—it opened him up to a broad audience and is consistently voted the Best Album in the *Backstreets* readers' polls. Just like *Born in the U.S.A.*, it was not only a product of Springsteen's personal experience, but a product of the national events around him. The Vietnam War was ending. The effects of Watergate were still reverberating throughout the country. These events contributed to the destruction of the myths of America at the time; a destruction which perhaps began with Kennedy's assassination and was nearing completion. *Born to Run* was born out of these times with songs that, if not all full of dreams and hopes, were always of mythic proportions. The characters in the songs on that album were often the same fallible beings about whom Springsteen will always write, but most dreamed of a great escape or lived dramatic lives that were worth eulogizing. New myths needed creating, and by doing so, the album gave hope.

Nine years later, new national myths had been erected. Starting in 1980, Ronald Reagan had begun to reconstruct those national stories in a manner that obscured truth, and those myths needed destroying. The *Born in the U.S.A.* album and tour called attention to that need. The title song, before it was blurred by Rambo, the World Wrestling Federation, and Chrysler truck ads, did this better than any other. The remaining songs are all small stories—stories that say that love might bring some sense of hope to an empty world, stories that say that growing older leaves nothing but boring stories or a battle that's no longer yours to win, and stories that say that the towns around which America was based were dying. There were no myths here, no thoughts of escape or denial of consequences. For a country in which covert wars were being fought in the name of democracy, where small invasions were being pumped as major military triumphs, where it was marketed that poverty was solely the fault of the individual and not the system, where a presidency consisted of a figurehead, these small stories and myth-busting efforts were very important. The album gave hope in a new way. By fully acknowledging these shortcomings, we might look towards correcting them in the future, honestly and fully.

Springsteen took these politics on the road with him. When President Reagan tried to capture a little bit of the Springsteen magic as he campaigned in New Jersey, Springsteen fought back with a blistering version of "Johnny 99" in concert. The plight of hunger in a supposed healthy economy was emphasized at each concert with Springsteen's work with the local Food Banks. The *Nebraska* set in each show was often an opportunity to connect Central America to Vietnam, as was the



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A MESSAGE, BUT TO DO
SO TO THE WIDEST
AUDIENCE POSSIBLE.

addition of "War" late in the stadium leg of the tour. Audiences were being continually reminded of the creation of illusion in this country and the importance of removing that veil.

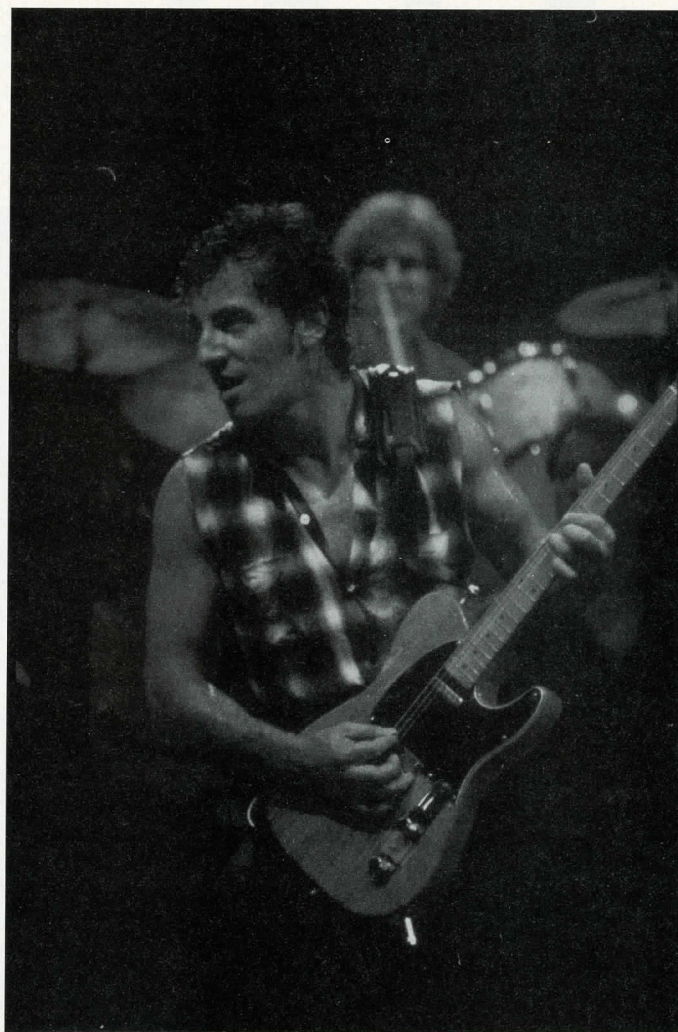
I don't know how much of the above was felt by longtime Springsteen fans when *Born in the U.S.A.* was released. Maybe some of what was felt was betrayal—betrayal at a perceived sell-out or at just making it a lot harder to get tickets and to hear the quiet songs. As someone who was almost 16 when the album was released, *BUSA* had some very powerful messages for me and will always remain the Springsteen album that affects me the most.

That first message was political. I grew up in a small town in south Georgia where the first real dissenting political voice I heard was from Bruce Springsteen. Because I believed in the music, I was willing to listen to the message. I thought about Vietnam for the first time in my life and tried to learn more about it. "Born in the U.S.A." represented a possible future for someone like me approaching draft age in an era of Central American struggles and perceived Soviet military might. I contributed to the Food Bank at the one concert I saw—a start at least. I paid attention to the African famine problem. I would later become an active member of Amnesty International. These are not monumental steps nor are they solutions to any of the problems above. But I am grateful, because Springsteen made me think about issues that I perhaps never would have considered or at the very least hadn't yet learned to question. To the teenagers at the time, and I don't know how many he reached, that myth-busting and politicizing was very important.

There were also personal messages as well as political. To a standard-issue tortured teenager, the pain in the songs was very real and powerful. The anguish of "Born in the U.S.A." or the painful romanticism of "Downbound Train" captured, in some sense, some of the things I thought I felt at the time. The most powerful song for me, believe it or not, was "Dancing in the Dark." When you're 16 and have no perspective on love and relationships, the desperate, searching struggle of it all makes perfect sense. And I don't think there will ever be a line written that captures adolescence (with a nod to "Hope I die before I get old") more than "Check my look in the mirror/Wanna change my clothes, my hair, my face."

And with that line came an important lesson—that those feelings of hopelessness never go away. That life is not about waiting for those feelings to disappear but acknowledging them, accepting them, and finding the best way to outrun them. The artistry was in capturing and articulating those feelings in ways I could not. That power of expression brought not only real understanding, but a sense of the other emotions he sang about, born of experiences I hadn't had yet. That is the benefit of being a young Springsteen fan. Instead of just having your current experience and feelings mirrored through Springsteen's music, as any committed person might have found while listening to *Tunnel of Love*, you get an idea and appreciation of emotions yet to come. You might even learn some lessons before you actually have to live through them.

Born in the U.S.A. is the story of a man in transition. It's the story of a man knowingly on the brink of superstardom trying to find the right role for himself as an artist and a human being. After "Independence Day" and "My Father's House," the absence of a song directed to his father shows a man working to be at peace with that relationship—a peace

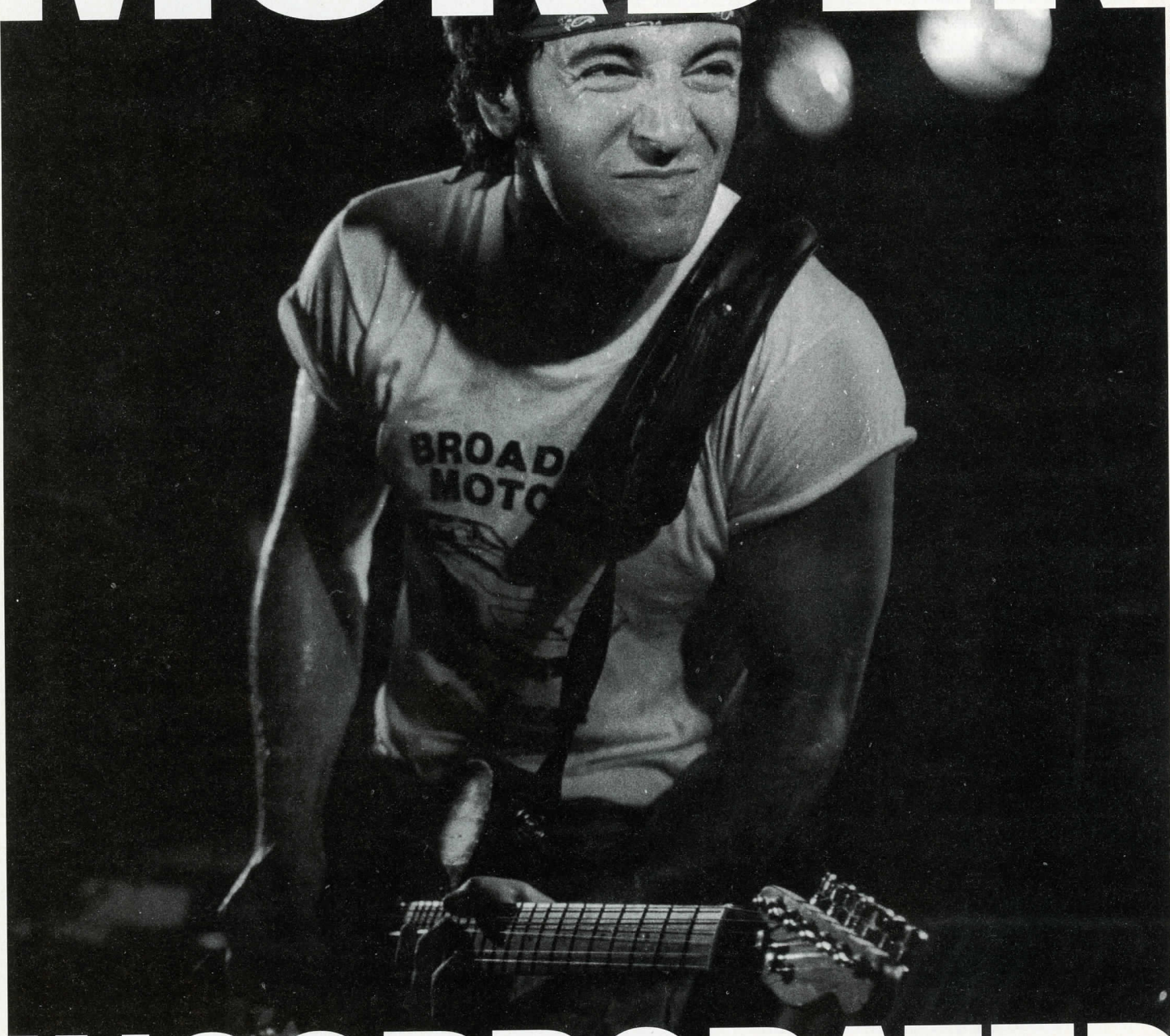


perhaps reached three years later in "Walk Like a Man." It is the story of a man who still hasn't found a way to balance his love for music and his personal life but is poised to learn. It is the story of a man becoming older and confronting it in song for the first time. And it is the story of a man who has worked for the oncoming recognition, who has come this far and could not turn back, who had to see what his music could truly become and mean not only for his longtime fans, but for the rest of the world.

To me, and other fans of my age who have stayed with him, it was an opportunity to join this journey. We weren't there at the beginning, but that didn't mean that in time we wouldn't understand where he and his fans had been so that we would fully appreciate where we were all going. And because the message and the journey were new to us, there were messages there that were really meant just for us, that maybe only we could appreciate fully. As we began to more fully contemplate our place in the world, this artistic work became another guidepost for us. To the older fans, I envy being truly young when *Born to Run* first came out and to have the memories of that newness combined with memories of first cars, first loves, and first escapes. But I also wouldn't trade my memories of that jumble of emotions that came out whenever *Born in the U.S.A.* was popped into the car cassette deck and the windows were down and the wind carried the combination of Bruce and my voice out into the night air. 🎸

MURDER

JOANNE JEFFERSON PHOTO



INCORPORATED

The Masterpiece That Never Was
By Charles R. Cross

When Bruce Springsteen sat down on January 3, 1982 to record a few songs into his Teac four-track tape deck, one of the first lines out of his mouth was "Born down in a dead man's town." It was a song he had just written, titled "Born in the U.S.A.," but it was a very different song than the one that virtually became Springsteen's trademark in the late '80s. Sung in a blues drawl, with words slurred together rather than enunciated, this original take is unlike anything that Springsteen had done previously, and not very close to anything he's done since. Though Springsteen's 1993 reinterpretation of the song in Europe was indeed closer to the original take than the released album version, it still was light years away from the chilling pure vision he set on tape on that cold day in January. ¶ Going through

one of his many periods of isolation, Springsteen had completed a successful European tour but had come back to America with more questions about himself than he had answers. He had mentioned to several interviewers around this period that he'd never really understood the United States as a concept—as a piece of historical myth—until he had seen how it was perceived outside its borders. Around this time Springsteen ended his relationship with his long-time girlfriend, and he moved from his Telegraph Hill house that had been as much of a home as he had ever had as an adult.

Sitting around his kitchen table in his rented Holmdel rambler, Springsteen recorded the songs that eventually became the *Nebraska* album. But while the development of that album has been widely reported (Bruce records some demos, tries to do band versions of the songs but they don't work, eventually releases his demos), what has not been written about is the other wealth of material Springsteen recorded in this time period, one of his most prolific periods as a songwriter. Springsteen himself told *Rolling Stone's* Kurt Loder in October of 1984 that "for *Born in the U.S.A.* we recorded maybe 50 songs." Max Weinberg put the number at "about 80" in his July 1984 interview with *Backstreets*. And even Dave Marsh weighs in with a figure of 70 in his book *Glory Days*, citing producer Jon Landau: "[Landau] pointed out that they'd already cut about 70 tracks, which was a ratio of about six to one. To get two more worth keeping would likely require cutting about a dozen new songs."

So even the most conservative estimate (which is Bruce's, but since these marathon studio sessions are so draining on him it probably seemed like 8,000 songs) puts the number at 50 songs cut during those long recording sessions. The difference between Bruce's figure of 50 and Landau's and Weinberg's estimates of 70 and 80 might be attributed to whether one includes the *Nebraska* material in the total. If you were to deduct the ten or 12 *Nebraska* songs you'd end up with estimates of between 50 and 60 songs being considered for *Born in the U.S.A.*

We do know that 12 of the songs from those sessions were eventually released on the *Born in the U.S.A.* album in June of 1984. Another five tunes from the sessions ("Pink Cadillac," "Shut Out the Light," "Johnny Bye Bye," "Stand On It," and "Janey, Don't You Lose Heart") were eventually released as b-sides. But the math still suggests a vast number of outtakes, somewhere in the area of 32 unreleased or unfinished songs. As Springsteen told Loder in October 1984, "We record a lot of material, but we just don't release it all."

Considering the importance of the albums he did release in the first four years of the decade (his first commercial breakthrough with *The River*, his most critically acclaimed album *Nebraska*, and his most successful album *Born in the U.S.A.*), the unreleased material of the early '80s represents some of Springsteen's most important lost writings. There are other "lost" eras of Springsteen's career, and Bruce is infamous for recording five songs for every one that he releases. But the period between 1982 and 1984 remains one of the great mysteries in the Springsteen canon, and a mystery that's not likely to be solved until Springsteen releases a box set. Without input from

Springsteen himself it is impossible to track everything those sessions yielded (even the E Street Band members were not privy to many of Springsteen's demo sessions), but there is enough information to make an analysis worthwhile.

Everywhere you look, Murder, Inc.

During the many recording sessions that led up to the release of *Born in the U.S.A.*, Springsteen had several false finishes: points in the process when he thought he was done, only to reconsider later (sometimes based on feedback from Landau, Steve Van Zandt or Chuck Plotkin). In the late part of 1983, it was clear that Springsteen had enough material together and was happy enough with it to consider making up a sample track listing. He probably did this several times during the recording sessions, but it is unlikely he tried to make a record out of the songs until late in 1983.

The lost album of 1983 has frequently been rumored to have been called *Murder Inc.*, and popular legend talks about the release as if it were just inches away from being issued in stores. When Springsteen was recording *The River* he prematurely considered releasing a single album, tentatively titled *The Ties That Bind*. That "concept" of an album was developed enough that an album cover was mocked up and a track running order was established. *The Ties That Bind* was enough of a real project that tapes were even cut for the proposed album, and one has recently been bootlegged in Europe under the title *The Ties That Bind*: The bootleg CD cover shows the actual tape box from the studio and the sound quality of the bootleg is that of a master tape.

But unlike *The Ties That Bind*, *Murder Inc.* is not known to have been given enough of a green light by Springsteen to have been sent to graphic artists or to have had a track list made up. But for the sake of analyzing this important period of Springsteen's career, it's worth speculating on what that 1983 album might have been like, and *Murder Inc.* is such an evocative name for an album—it's a perfect summation of the sound that linked *Nebraska* with *Born in the U.S.A.*

The title itself comes from one of the many songs that Springsteen cut during the recording sessions. The tune is dark and somber, thematically reflecting more of the *Nebraska* tone than the uplifting rock of the *Born in the U.S.A.* album. The song follows the adventures of an urban dweller who finds life in the inner cities of America a step back to Al Capone's Chicago. The name *Murder Incorporated* was used by journalists in the 1920s to describe the business-like nature of Capone's hit squad, and it was popularized by a true-crime comic book with the same title. A 1960 b-movie titled "Murder, Inc." starred Stuart Whitman, and was directed by Burt Balaban and Stuart Rosenberg. Springsteen may have been inspired by the movie, the comic book or the nickname for the hit squads.

Dave Marsh's *Glory Days* is really the best source of information on the *Born in the U.S.A.* sessions, and while Marsh's book was poorly reviewed in some quarters for painting too pretty a picture of some parts of Springsteen's life, his excellent reporting on the *Nebraska* and *Born in the U.S.A.* sessions is detailed and informative

(reason enough to reconsider the paperback of the book). Marsh first brings up the title "Murder, Inc." while talking about a handful of songs recorded in May of 1982 in New York, referring to one of them as "the brutal 'Murder, Inc.'"

"Murder, Inc." was just one of many outtakes from *Born in the U.S.A.*, but perhaps the title was too cinematic for most fans and journalists to resist applying it to the unfinished, early 1983 album. It sure sounds like a great album title, whether Springsteen ever thought so or not.

January 3, 1982

To understand and analyze the various outtakes and recording sessions that lead up to *Born in the U.S.A.*, one must begin at *Nebraska* and the first recording sessions for this album. Using Marsh's reports as a starting point, one traces the genesis of this album back to an overcast day, January 3, 1982 in Holmdel, New Jersey. It was then that Springsteen recorded this legendary tape on a Teac four-track tape machine. Marsh tells the story well, quoting Springsteen's motivation: "I told Mike [Batlan], the guy that does my guitars, 'Mike, go get a tape player so I can record these songs,'" Springsteen told Marsh. "I figured what takes me so long in the studio is not having the songs written. So I said, I'm gonna write 'em and I'm gonna tape 'em. If I can make them sound good with just me, then I know they'll be fine. Then I can play 'em with the band."

Those sessions yielded the tunes that eventually became the *Nebraska* album, but there were several other tunes cut that didn't make it to *Nebraska*. The only known outtake from the *Nebraska* work is a song titled "Losin' Kind." Though a tape of this song has never been circulated among collectors, it was played recently during a lecture at the Badlands convention in England; reports were that it sounded like an alternative version of "Highway Patrolman."

There were six other songs recorded in early January that did not end up making the cut once Springsteen decided to go with his original demo tape, and these tunes formed the nucleus around which Springsteen built *Born in the U.S.A.* The outtake songs were: "Born in the U.S.A.," "Child Bride" (a song about a guy kidnapping his underage girlfriend that combines elements of "Working on the Highway" and "Johnny 99"), "Pink Cadillac," "Downbound Train," "Johnny Bye Bye," and "Working on the Highway." There is some debate about whether the original tape contained "Working on the Highway." According to Landau and Marsh in *Glory Days* it did, but the song was recast later in the May 1982 sessions. The take of "Child Bride" that uses some of the same lyrics as "Working" may have been misidentified in Marsh's report.

Considering Springsteen's prolific writing habit during this time, it's perhaps most surprising that several of these outtakes survived Bruce's editing process and ended up forming the core of his next record. Since Springsteen's best average is around five recorded songs for every one released, the long time he stuck with these tunes is testament to the power of his muse when they were cut. "Child Bride" is the only song from these sessions never to appear again, though as noted, elements from it were used in other later tunes during the

What if BORN IN THE U.S.A. had never been released?

A MURDER INC. FANTASY

On June 4, 1984, Bruce Springsteen released what was to be one of the most important albums of his career. *Born in the U.S.A.* showed the world what his legions of fans had known for a long time. It became one of the biggest selling albums of all time. It was an end to one side of Bruce Springsteen and the beginning of another. But what if *Born in the U.S.A.* had never been released? by Trace L. Hull

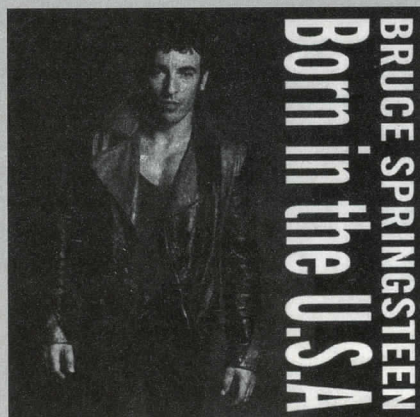
10/1/83 New York, NY, The Hit Factory
Springsteen returns to the studio with the full E Street Band to put the finishing touches on an album tentatively called *Murder, Inc.*

10/27/83 New York, NY, The Hit Factory
Three new songs are recorded, "Dancing in the Dark," "Glory Days" and "Bobby Jean." The songs are later put aside and remain unreleased.

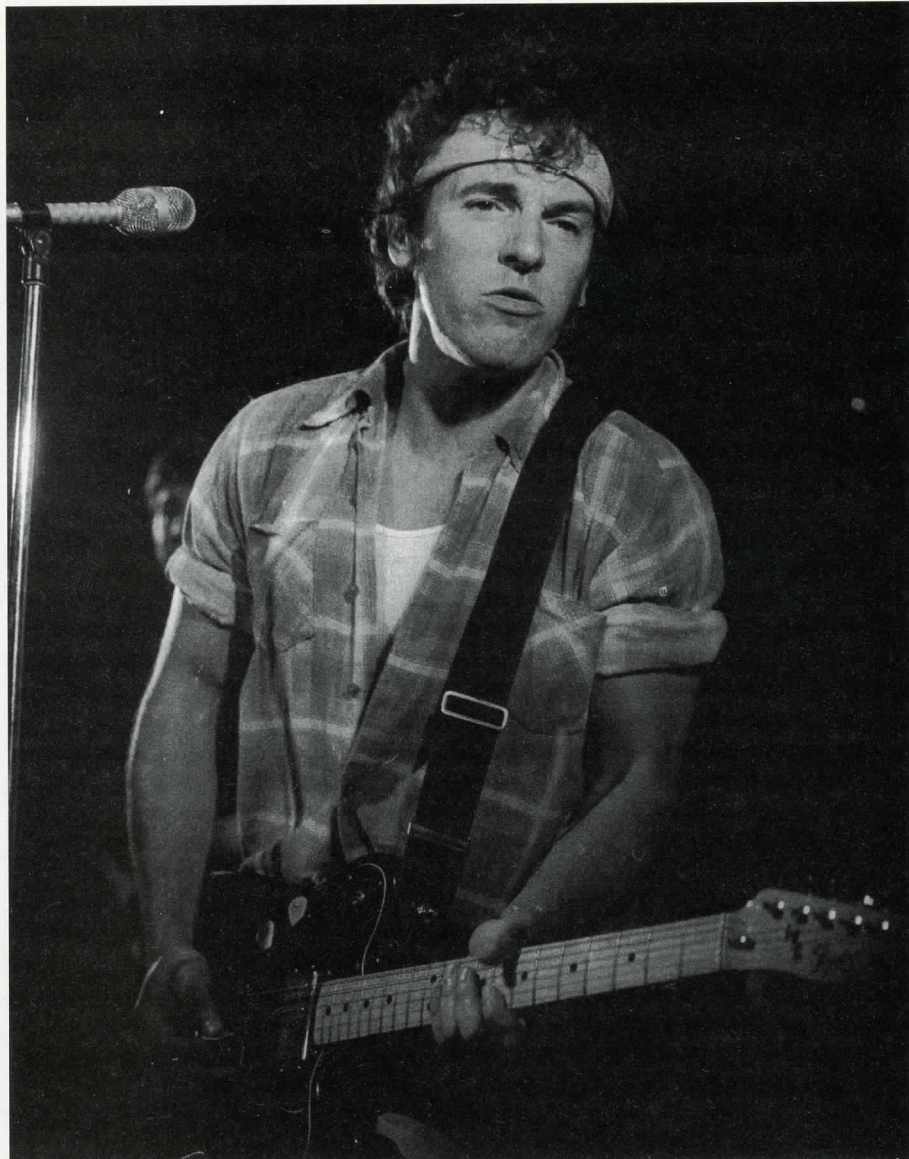
1/14/84 Columbia executives become uneasy after listening to the final product. After dismal sales of *Nebraska* (by Springsteen standards), the company questions the logic of releasing an album like *Murder, Inc.* "Commercial suicide" was a phrase tossed around by the company.

2/8/84 The album artwork is shot by Annie Leibovitz. It consists of Bruce sitting on the steps of an old house in a run-down neighborhood. Shot in black and white, it's a very solemn photo. Columbia was frightened that another Springsteen album without his photo might be detrimental to sales.

2/30/84 York, PA, Soundstage
Springsteen takes the full E Street Band, including Miami Steve and new background vocalist Patti Scialfa into rehearsal for an upcoming summer tour.



4/19/84 The first single from *Murder, Inc.* is released. The song is "Born in the U.S.A.," and it is backed with a non-album track called "Shut Out the Light." Both songs are very similar to the sound of *Nebraska*, while the themes seem to reflect on the plight of a Vietnam veteran returning home. It enters the *Billboard* charts at number 73, climbs to 23, and then begins a quick



sessions. There may be other outtakes from the early *Nebraska* demos, and there are a few other songs not accounted for. For instance, exactly where and when "The Big Payback" sits has never been easily determined: the song certainly sounds like a *Nebraska* outtake, but it has never been reported as a tune on the original tape.

There are several different versions of the songs on the original *Nebraska* tape (and the outtakes) that were recorded either on January 3 or during the next several days. Again, Springsteen as quoted by Marsh in *Glory Days*: "Some songs I only did once, like 'Highway Patrolman.' The other songs I did maybe two times, three times at the most." So in addition to the released versions on *Nebraska*, other takes of some of these tunes exist.

Springsteen then took the *Nebraska* songs into the studio with the E Street Band in New York and attempted to record the material in band arrangements. These sessions, which most likely began in May of 1982, represent the first band sessions of the *Born in the U.S.A.* era. In the past Springsteen had camped out in the studio until he finished a record, running up huge

studio bills. And while the bill for the many sessions involving the *Born in the U.S.A.* material was probably the biggest yet, Springsteen attempted to do more writing outside the confines of the studio (hence the reason to send Mike Batlan out for the tape recorder). As a result it's hard to pin down exact dates on the sessions of 1982 and 1983. Springsteen and the band might be in the studio for two weeks and then take a few weeks break. Both Bruce and the band members have commented in interviews that they felt like they were in the studio for years but in real time the sessions were spread out over many months. And before the band was able to tackle the *Nebraska* demos, Springsteen had already written several other songs and worked some of them into acoustic demos.

Spending time in L.A. during the spring of 1982, Bruce had experimented with writing several songs with a different tempo than he'd normally used. According to Marsh in *Glory Days*, David Geffen urged Springsteen to write a song for Donna Summer. Bruce came up with "Cover Me," a tune that Landau liked so much he suggested Bruce keep it for himself and come up

with another song to give away. It's unclear whether the original demo of "Cover Me" reflected the lyrics used in the finished version or whether it was the outtake version commonly known as "Drop On Down and Cover Me." Springsteen most likely wrote the "Drop On Down" song first and considered that demo for Summer. To make up for keeping "Cover Me" for himself, Springsteen then wrote "Protection" for Summer, and at some point during 1982-1983 he was known to have recorded his version with the E Street Band. Marsh also implies that during the early part of the year, Springsteen came up with an early version of "Janey, Don't You Lose Heart." It may be that this demo was the one long-rumored to have been sent to Stevie Nicks. Nicks is known to have recorded the song, though her version was never released.

Electric Nebraska

When the early 1982 sessions began in earnest at the Power Station in New York City, the E Street Band cut the *Nebraska* material but also added another handful of songs, according to Marsh. Known to be recorded during this phase (with band versions noted to separate tracks that were first done as acoustic demos during *Nebraska*) were "I'm on Fire," "Glory Days," "Darlington County," "Born in the U.S.A." (band), "Downbound Train" (band), "Working on the Highway" (band), "I'm Goin' Down," "Murder Inc.," and "Frankie." This last song was somewhat of a surprise in that it had also been recorded for the *Darkness on the Edge of Town* album. "Frankie" had been played live in 1976 and had long been a favorite among hardcore fans, but since Bruce didn't consider it for *The River* it was unusual that it came back to life almost six years later. Considering that the band also cut all the *Nebraska* songs during these sessions—even though those tracks were eventually shelved—this one period probably represents one of the most productive in Springsteen's entire career: He and the band recorded at least 20 songs, and many of the songs have gone on to become milestones in Bruce's catalog.

"Born in the U.S.A." was perhaps the most important song recorded during this session. Springsteen has said in several interviews that the track used on the record was the second take; Landau in *Glory Days* mentions that only about five versions of "Born in the U.S.A." were recorded because the band and Bruce knew almost immediately that they had hit the mark with the song. "The first take could have been used," Landau told Marsh. One outtake of "Born in the U.S.A." has been leaked to collectors that is virtually identical to the released version, though it has an extended fade-out featuring the band jamming for almost three additional minutes. It's unknown whether this represents the first take or the third, fourth or fifth version.

Despite the excitement of creating such an important song on tape, Marsh describes these recording sessions as grueling, and it sounds like it was clear to everyone involved that the *Nebraska* material wasn't working with the full band. And though there clearly was a line-up for an "electric *Nebraska*," at this point Springsteen

had not decided to release this material in any form. He could have gone back and added the several *Born in the U.S.A.* songs to the acoustic mix, creating a record more like *The River*, with rockers and ballads intertwined. However, as Marsh and Landau note in *Glory Days*, the material didn't just sound different musically, it also represented two thematic extremes: one group of songs represented despair while the other had hints of celebration.

But it certainly would have been possible at this point for Springsteen to construct a single late 1982 album. If one were to follow the pattern established on *The River*, that December 1982 release might have included "Atlantic City," "Johnny 99" and "Open All Night" in band versions; acoustic versions of "Nebraska," "Highway Patrolman" and "My Father's House"; and band versions of "Born in the U.S.A.," "Murder Inc.," "I'm on Fire," and "Downbound Train." It seems strange to consider such an album now since both *Nebraska* and *Born in the U.S.A.* represent albums with such unified themes, but it certainly was possible and in all likelihood was considered (maybe not with this particular track list) as the sessions wore on and everyone involved became exhausted.

We know that the early 1982 sessions continued at least through June 12. On the 12th, Springsteen jammed with Jackson Browne in Central Park, coming fresh from the end of a session. Soon thereafter the first Power Station sessions ended, and the first leg of the marathon was over but without a finished album.

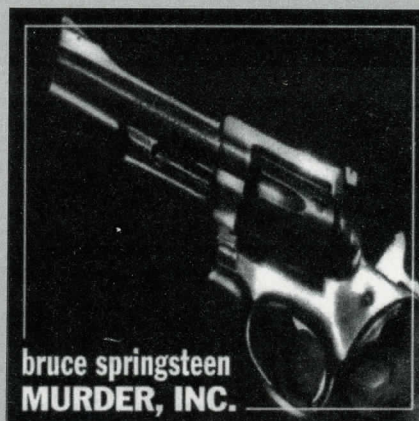
Landau, in *Glory Days*, summed up the frustration felt by everyone involved: "If at the end of the evening, your night's work is you cut 'Born in the U.S.A.' or 'Glory Days,' you feel pretty good. We knew what we had at the time. You go in and you spend six hours cutting 'Atlantic City' and at the end of the night you play the demo against what you did for the last six hours and you're nowhere, you feel pretty bad."

On the Prowl

In June of 1982, Landau, Springsteen, Van Zandt and Plotkin all weighed in and the decision was made to try to release the original *Nebraska* demos. It may be the most important artistic decision Jon Landau ever made as Bruce's producer, certainly it left us with the only Springsteen album that represents one singular vision. But after the decision was made to try to release the demo, problems came up with mastering the release and those problems dominated much of the work on the album during the summer of 1982. The E Street Band stopped working on the rock record for a while as Bruce, Landau and Plotkin concentrated on trying to make a four-track tape sound like a major label release. There were times during that mastering nightmare when the idea was almost abandoned. Eventually, *Nebraska* was released on October 4, 1982, almost ten months to the day after it had been recorded.

After the early 1982 sessions had wrapped up in early June, Springsteen spent most of the rest of the summer either writing new songs, working

descent. But not before catching the attention of the Vietnam Veterans Association.



4/23/84 At the last minute, the final cover artwork is changed to a close-up of a revolver in someone's hand. Columbia becomes a little more than concerned about the lack of Bruce's image on the cover and eventually convinces him to put a facial close-up on the back.

4/28/84 At the request of Ron Kovic, author of *Born on the Fourth of July*, Springsteen donates a song called "The Promise" to a benefit album for disabled veterans of all wars. Here it takes on a new meaning—the broken promise between the veterans and their country.

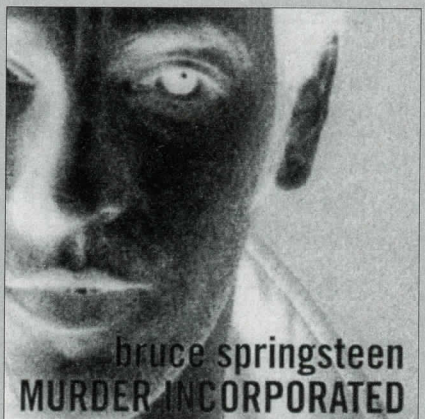
5/6/84 Posters and ads announcing the arrival of *Murder, Inc.* appear in record stores and trade magazines.

5/17/84 The arrival of *Murder, Inc.* is delayed until late June.

5/21/84 Springsteen sits for an interview with *Rolling Stone* magazine.

5/26/84 Tickets go on sale for the first leg of the "Everywhere You Look... Murder, Inc." tour. Sales are slow to start.

6/27/84 *Murder, Inc.* is released and shipped platinum. Side 1: Born in the U.S.A./State of the Nation/Yellow Hearts/A Gun in Every Home/Our Coda. Side 2: Seeds/Frankie/Blood on Our Hands/Fields of Thunder/This Hard Land/Dangerous Corners/Murder, Inc.

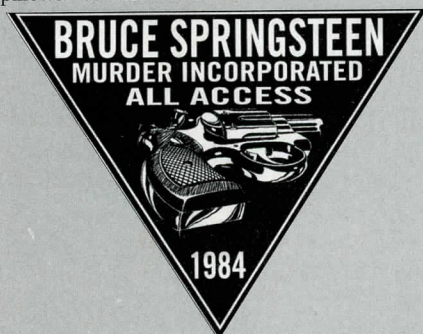


7/4/84 "Murder, Inc." is released as the second single b/w "Two for a Penny," a slow, sad song that seems to have been inspired from a chapter in John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*. The sleeve features a close-up of Springsteen's face cropped nearly right in the middle and printed in negative.



A MURDER INC. FANTASY cont.

7/11/84 The *Rolling Stone* interview hits the stands with the caption, "Death's Head Revisited?" In the interview Bruce says, "After *Nebraska*, which was a pretty dark album to begin with, I still had all of these things inside me, y'know? With *Nebraska* I was startin' to open my eyes a little. With this one, I think I'm finally startin' to see. Unlike say *Darkness* or *Born to Run*, where the people were running, looking for a way out, these people don't have anyplace to run. They're backed against the wall, in the corner. And it's in their own homes. That's just the way things are." He continues, "I tried to expose the problems on both a personal and worldwide scale. The album opens with 'Born in the U.S.A.,' which talks about a problem that has needed resolving for far too long. This is a big, national problem, but also very personal. The album closes with 'Murder, Inc.' where everything is brought back home to that personal level. It's like, even though we got all these huge-scale crises, it always comes back to the people who get up and go to work everyday. On side one you got guns in Saigon. On side two you got guns under our pillows." The album receives 4.5 stars.



7/17/84 Pittsburgh, PA, Civic Arena

Springsteen opens his first tour in nearly four years. Tickets are still available at show time. 32 songs are played. Set one: Born in the U.S.A. (solo electric)/The Price You Pay/Badlands/Dangerous Corners/Atlantic City/Johnny 99/Meeting Across the River/Jungleland/A Gun in Every Home/Fields of Thunder/Thunder Road/Darkness on the Edge of Town/Who'll Stop the Rain/Our Coda. Set two: Frankie/Blood on Our Hands/Prove It All Night/Jackson Cage/The River/The Promise/Streets of Fire (solo a cappella)/Seeds/Point Blank/This Hard Land/Murder, Inc. Encores: 4th of July, Asbury Park/Backstreets/Born to Run/Hungry Heart/Rosalita/Quarter to Three/Can't Sit Down.

7/18/84 Pittsburgh, PA, Civic Arena

A 30 song set. Set one: Murder, Inc./Badlands/Dangerous Corners/The Price You Pay/Johnny 99/Reason to Believe/Meeting Across the River/Jungleland/A Gun in Every Home/Fields of Thunder/Thunder Road/Something in the Night/It's My Life/Our Coda. Set two: Yellow Hearts/Blood on Our Hands/Prove It All Night/The Ties that Bind/The River/The Promise/Night (solo a cappella)/State of the Nation/Point Blank/This Hard Land/Born in the U.S.A./ (encores) Growin' Up/Born to Run/Hungry Heart/Rosalita/Twist and Shout. *Pittsburgh Press* reports: "Back to the Badlands."

8/19/84 MTV: the "Murder, Inc." video has its world premiere at 5:00 pm. It includes news clips of violence and destruction interspersed with Springsteen, dressed in old loose jeans and wearing a large v-neck black t-shirt. He stands in a run-down area of New York City playing

to oversee the production of *Nebraska* or hanging around the Jersey Shore. Though Bruce has been famous over the years for his many surprise club dates, the summer of 1982 represents his most prolific period of club-hopping, including over 40 unannounced jam sessions, in a half dozen clubs.

Springsteen's repertoire this summer included dozens of cover songs, but he played very little of his own material, debuting just one new song called "On the Prowl." In its early version the song was not identified by crowds as a Springsteen original, in part because it sounds like a bar band classic. Springsteen even included the song as part of "Lucille" one night. Eventually, some of the lyrics of "On the Prowl" ended up in "Downbound Train."

On October 3rd, the night before *Nebraska* was to be released, Bruce played with Cats on a Smooth Surface (his favorite bar band of the time), and did a 14 song set that included "On the Prowl" (done as a separate song) and the live world premiere of "Open All Night." It was one of the longest club shows Bruce has ever done. It would be the last time Springsteen would play in New Jersey until 1983.

There was no tour to support *Nebraska* and Bruce did little press. His token allowance to market the record was letting a music video be made but the video did not feature him. Instead of working his new record, Springsteen retreated into isolation again and took the famous long drive across the country from New Jersey to L.A. In L.A. he planned to work on mixing the rock tracks that had already been cut.

The Home Demos

While *Nebraska* was receiving raves from critics, Springsteen was back at the task of writing and recording more songs. He spent October through December of 1982 in Los Angeles where he had constructed an extensive home studio. Springsteen was supposed to be working on mixing the songs that had already been recorded and whittling them down into a completed album.

But Bruce didn't follow his manager's instructions—instead of just mixing tracks that had already been done, he recorded a whole slew of new songs to consider for the album. Though the October 1982 Los Angeles home demos are rumored to have included over 40 songs, only a handful can be confirmed at this point in time, including "Follow That Dream," "Sugarland," "Johnny Bye Bye" and "Shut Out the Light." Bruce in *Glory Days*: "I got to Los Angeles and I just set up shop in my garage and I just kept goin', you know. That's when I did 'Shut Out the Light' and 'Johnny Bye Bye,' and I did a version of 'Follow That Dream' and I did a whole bunch of other things. So I just continued because I was excited about the fact that I felt the *Nebraska* stuff was my most personal stuff." "Johnny Bye Bye" had already been cut during the original *Nebraska* sessions but, as Springsteen was frequently known to do, he recorded the same song in a slightly different direction, a pattern he might follow a dozen times on a single song.

Springsteen returned to New Jersey for the holidays (and jammed at Little Steven's wedding on New Year's Eve), but by mid-January he was back in California working again in his home studio in the Hollywood Hills. There he worked on "Sugarland" some more and tried a song called "Don't Back Down." Soon after Bruce returned to L.A., his friend Landau flew out to discuss the new songs Bruce had written. Landau felt that the material again sounded like it worked better solo than it would with a band. As Springsteen told Marsh later, "At the time I felt that maybe this [solo recording] is where the whole thing is going in some fashion. Maybe the idea is gonna be to just keep the thing real stripped down right now, almost like a John Wesley Harding type of thing."

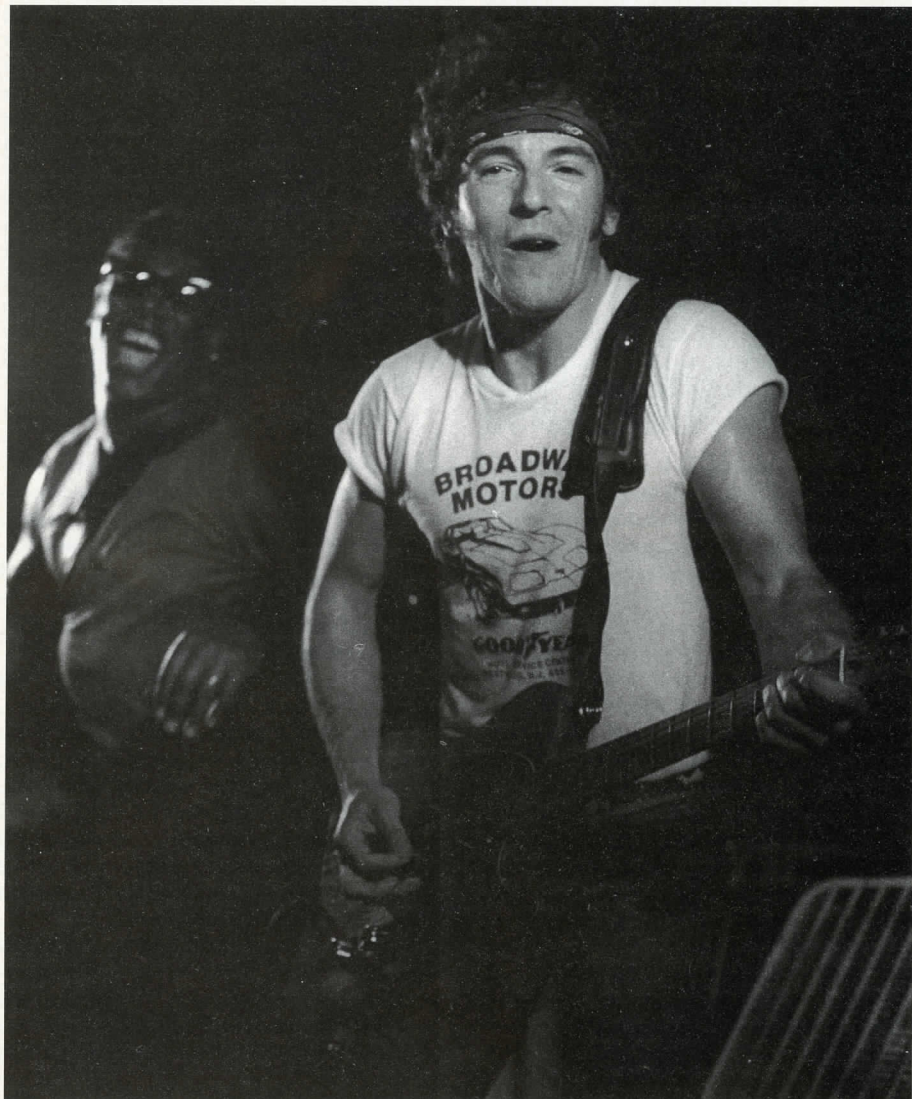
Your Hometown

Marsh says that Bruce did have one song that he wanted to try to record with the band and so he returned to New York in February to the Hit Factory, the studio he'd use for most of 1983. The song was "My Hometown," and it's one of the few tracks from this period that we know something about the evolution of. At the recent Badlands convention in England, a collector played a couple of alternative versions of this song that have never been circulated before and they illustrate Springsteen's writing and recording techniques.

The first take of the song has been recorded with a drum machine in the background and Bruce on double-tracked chorus vocals. Most likely cut in Springsteen's home garage studio, the demo track features Bruce on all the instruments: guitar, synthesizer, drum machine, and bass. And perhaps most surprisingly of all, the song has a different chorus, about "your hometown."

A second take of the song, also played at the English convention, shows the song slowly evolving. This take has the chorus of "my hometown" intact now and it has been slowed down slightly (though both these early demo tracks are very sped up compared to the album version). Springsteen clearly has written the song around a keyboard riff, rather than around a guitar chord, which makes these demos dramatically different than his '70s work, most of which was written around guitar (and different than the *Nebraska* songs, which again were written using guitar). There are only minor musical changes between "Your Hometown" and the "My Hometown" demo, but the slight changes help illustrate how every time Springsteen cuts a song (even in a demo version) he fleshes it out further and adds more musically and lyrically. The second "My Hometown" demo doesn't sound musically like the album version but the basic riff and the lyrics are all there.

Springsteen most likely took these very demo recordings into the Hit Factory, played them for the band and then cut a full band version. Springsteen cut "My Hometown" with the band in New York in February of 1983, according to Marsh. He then flew back to Los Angeles and didn't return until the end of April, when he started hitting the Jersey Shore clubs again.



Back in the Studio

In May and June of 1983 more sessions were scheduled at the Hit Factory and those produced these songs that we know of: "Stand On It," "My Love Will Not Let You Down," and a new version of "Pink Cadillac," the take they eventually released. On May 10, Springsteen recorded several versions of "Johnny Bye Bye" and even tried out a new song called "County Fair." During this same May 10 extended studio date, Springsteen finished up what would be the final mixes on "Born in the U.S.A."

Despite the successes he had in early May, the sessions seemed to be dragging on forever and by August Springsteen felt he was ready to throw in the towel and try again to make an album from the numerous tracks he had in the can, whether they linked thematically or not. Marsh says that Springsteen now looks back on that time and admits even he didn't know what was going on. "When we started to mix the record, I don't really know what we thought we were doing," Springsteen told Marsh in *Glory Days*. "We must have thought we had an album." At the time Springsteen gave Plotkin a list of songs with a sequence. This was the closest they had come over the past two years to creating a record, and

if there is a "lost" album from these sessions, this sequence list is it.

What that album consisted of isn't exactly clear. Marsh talks around it, telling us a few songs that were on Springsteen's list but concentrating more on what was not on it. It did not include "Cover Me," "I'm On Fire," "Working on the Highway," "Pink Cadillac," "I'm Goin' Down," and "Darlington County." It *did* include some songs that eventually made the record, specifically "Born in the U.S.A.," "Downbound Train," "My Hometown" and "Glory Days." Other cuts included were "Shut Out the Light" and "Follow That Dream." Both Plotkin and Landau argued that the album did not have the cohesion that marked Bruce's greatest work.

Springsteen took this criticism to heart and did what he always does when faced with adversity: he wrote another song. As Marsh writes in *Glory Days*, "Bruce's response to [his conversation with Plotkin] was almost immediate. 'Two nights later, we went into the studio and he said, 'I have a song I want to cut.' We cut 'Bobby Jean,' and it was like the fever had been broken,'" Marsh quotes Plotkin as saying.

After the recording of "Bobby Jean" things didn't immediately fall into place. Marsh says

his guitar. It's night, and as the song continues it begins to rain until Springsteen is soaked. He continues to play and sing until the rain subsides and the camera pulls back and pans to his left. The last shot is of police cars jammed into the middle of the street, with the lights reflecting off the wet blacktop. In the background Springsteen is heard repeating "murder, everywhere you look now, murder..."

7/20/84 Cleveland, OH, Richfield Coliseum

Sold out. 31 songs played. Set list same as 7/17 except "Seeds" is dropped and "Atlantic City" is replaced by "Nebraska." *Cleveland Plain Dealer* reports: "Gunned Down by Springsteen."

7/21/84 Cleveland, OH, Richfield Coliseum

The set list is the same as 7/18 with slight deviations. Springsteen seems to have two set lists with a core of songs that remains the same every night with just a few songs changed. "Spirit in the Night" replaces "Growin' Up," and "Street Fighting Man" replaces "It's My Life." Bruce and the band are called back after ten minutes to play "I Don't Wanna Go Home."

7/22/84 *Murder, Inc.* is at #12 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 albums chart.

7/26/84 Indianapolis, Market Square Arena

By all accounts, the hottest night of the tour so far. "Born in the U.S.A." is played for the first time with a full band. Presented this way, it becomes an anthem that has the audience punching the air and singing the chorus.

7/29/84 Bloomington, MN, Met Center

"Roulette" is played during the soundcheck.

7/30/84 Bloomington, MN, Met Center

Set list identical to 7/17 except for two additions. A new song called "I Ain't Got You" debuts before "She's the One." Similar in style to "Not Fade Away," the song is a duet between Bruce and Patti.



8/3/84 Chicago, IL, Rosemont Horizon

A 29 song set includes "Drive All Night," "Held Up Without a Gun," "Murder Inc.," "I Ain't Got You," and a new song called "Midnight Bulletin," which is released as the b-side of "Frankie."

8/27/84 Los Angeles, CA, Sports Arena

A rare appearance of "Lost in the Flood" highlights this 32 song set. Bruce pulls out all the stops for the final night of a four night stand. Other highlights: "Jackson Cage," "Held Up Without a Gun," and "The Big Payback."

10/2/84 Springsteen's second video, "Seeds," debuts on MTV. Concert footage is interspersed with clips from the dust bowl era. Oddly enough, considering the song talks about migrant workers in Texas, the single is



A MURDER INC. FANTASY cont.

only released in the UK. Another non-album b-side is added, a song called "Downbound Train."

10/30/84 Houston, TX, The Summit

A 31 song set includes "Growin' Up" (complete with the teenage werewolf story), "Merry Christmas Baby" and "Santa Claus is Comin' to Town." When the band left the stage at the conclusion of the second set, there was an auspicious delay before they finally returned. Ten minutes later the band returns in costume, with Springsteen donning a cape and plastic vampire teeth, the band launches into "Monster Mash" right into "Land of 1000 Dances."

11/16/84 Baton Rouge, LA, LSU Center

Except for song placement, the set has changed little since the beginning of the tour. Bruce still seems to be concentrating on the darker aspects of life and his songs. Set one: Born in the U.S.A. (back to its original brooding form, after it was mistaken for a song of patriotism)/The Price You Pay/Fields of Thunder/Badlands/Dangerous Corners/ Nebraska/Mansion on the Hill/Darkness on the Edge of Town/A Gun in Every Home/Meeting Across the River/Jungleland/Our Coda. Set 2: Thunder Road/Frankie/Blood on Our Hands/ Prove it All Night/The River/Seeds/Adam Raised a Cain/This Hard Land/Streets of Fire/The River/Backstreets. Encores: Murder, Inc./Hungry Heart/Ain't Got You/She's the One/Born to Run/Rosalita/Detroit Medley/Merry Christmas Baby.

11/17/84 A review in the *Baton Rouge Leader* reads, "Lighten Up, Bruce."

12/4/84 E. Rutherford, NJ, Brendan Byrne Arena Fifth night of a seven night stand starts at 9:30 pm due to a snow storm that batters the East Coast. Too late to be canceled, the show goes on until 1:25 am.

12/15/84 Landover, MD, Capital Centre

The last night of the 1984 North American tour ends with a 31 song set and Bruce exclaiming, "Stay warm, we'll see ya this summer!"

2/22/85 After nearly two months of rest, Springsteen sits with Charles R. Cross, editor of *Backstreets* magazine, and gives the magazine its first exclusive interview. The only condition is that Mr. Cross doesn't ask about "Roulette."

3/3/85 Birmingham, England, Intl. Arena

The *Murder, Inc.* Tour heads to Europe. A 29 song set introduces an entirely new playlist for the forthcoming European tour. Set 1: Badlands/Born in the U.S.A. (back to full band)/ A Gun in Every Home/Out in the Street/The Promised Land/Growin' Up/Night/Atlantic City/Reason to Believe/Seeds/Darkness on the Edge of Town/Who'll Stop the Rain/Our Coda. Set 2: Thunder Road/Prove it All Night/The River/Jackson Cage/Ain't Got You/She's the One/Adam Raised a Cain/Seeds/The Promise/Yellow Hearts/Jungleland. Encores: Murder, Inc./Backstreets/Kitty's Back/Rosalita/Tenth Avenue Freeze-Out.

3/5/85 The *New Music Express* says that last night's Bruce Springsteen show in Birmingham showed a "...madman possessed. There was no rhyme or reason to anything played—he was all over the place, obviously flying by the seat of his pants. Kudos to the band who were able to keep up with all the last minute changes. Leave it to the Yanks!"

3/6-7/85 London, England, Wembley Arena

Another 29 song set on 3/6 that is everywhere.

Landau drove down to Springsteen's house (we assume this is in late August) and the two sat down and listened to a proposed acetate of the album. Again, from Marsh's *Glory Days*: "It just wasn't a record; it just didn't sound like one," Bruce said. "I've got a whole bunch of strange little songs that really, they're interesting but they don't seem to be mixing. It wasn't that all the stuff wasn't good on it. We had 'Shut Out the Light' on it and 'Follow That Dream.' Individually the things were good but they just didn't come together. And the difference in sound quality from the garage thing to the studio stuff was too haphazard. It left you flat." [One presumes the "garage thing" that Springsteen refers to are tracks recorded in LA in his home studio.]

After their meeting in Rumson, Landau was to again play a major role in determining the final line-up. He sent Bruce a five page letter suggesting an 11 song sequence for the album. Side one contained: "Born in the U.S.A.," "I'm Goin' Down," "Cover Me," "My Hometown," and "Bobby Jean." Side two was "My Love Will Not Let You Down," "Follow That Dream," "Glory Days," "Protection," "Janey, Don't You Lose Heart," and "I'm on Fire." The idea, Landau told Marsh, "was to make the album 'a collage having to do with past, present, and future.'" Landau's line-up included seven of the 12 cuts that made the final album.

The band returned to the studio in September and worked for several weeks on some of the earlier tracks that had been previously abandoned. In November they went into the studio again, this time without Landau and Plotkin, and recorded two songs, "No Surrender," and "Brothers Under the Bridges." Marsh describes "Brothers Under the Bridges" as being thematically similar to "Bobby Jean" and "No Surrender," and most likely is about Steve Van Zandt's departure. The song title never surfaced again anywhere, and no tapes have ever been leaked.

Studio records also show that during these November studio dates, Springsteen cut the song "T.V. Movie," which was a rockabilly uptempo song, not unlike both "You Can Look" and "Ramrod." Springsteen and several band members have referred to the song in interviews but it has never been leaked to collectors. The title alone suggests Bruce's "57 Channels," written almost six years later.

I Could Use Just a Little Help...

After these recordings Springsteen went through another crisis of faith in selecting the songs for the final cut. He brought in numerous friends and associates and played them some of the cuts and actually had them vote on what they liked the best. Springsteen also assembled the band and had them pick their favorite songs and the notes they jotted illustrate how divided the group was about the material they'd just spent two years recording. Only three songs that made it on the final album were suggested on every band member's lists: "Born in the U.S.A.," "Glory Days," and "Downbound Train." "This Hard Land," which never made it on the record,

was voted for by every band member, including Springsteen himself. On Springsteen's list he votes for "Frankie" but then crosses it out, perhaps because no other band member voted for the song. One title on the band voting sheets is only known from these documents, a song called "Little Girl Like You."

Even the voting sheets just seemed to confuse matters more, and strangely Springsteen's own tally includes just six of the songs that made it on the record. One suspects that if Springsteen, the E Street Band and the producers had taken votes every day for a month, they'd simply have 30 different ideas about how the album should be formed.

Again, Landau stepped in and to his credit forced the issue, forcing the album out of Springsteen and Plotkin. "I started to behave somewhat differently than I have in the past," Landau told Marsh in *Glory Days*. "We'd been working together for so long that I just felt I could say things in a real direct fashion." Landau pushed Springsteen to continue ahead and finish the album and over the first few months of the year, Springsteen did.

In March, the final line-up for the record was set with the one exception being that Landau, upon hearing the tracks in order, decided there wasn't a hit single on it. The discussion, between manager and artist at this point, was, according to Marsh, one of the most heated debates Springsteen and the usually restrained Landau had ever had. Springsteen became defensive, finally saying to Landau, "I've written 70 songs. You want another one, *you* write it."

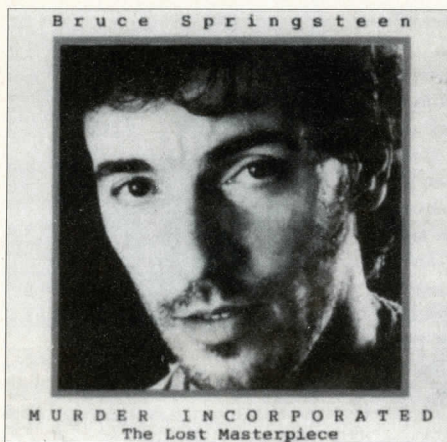
Springsteen went home to his hotel after one of the few arguments he'd ever had with his producer/mentor/friend and sat down and in the moment wrote "Dancing in the Dark." The band recorded it in late March and it became the final element of the album.

Even after the addition of "Dancing" Springsteen wanted to continue recording and said he hoped for two more songs. It was almost as if once he got going on the nightmarish task of trying to complete the album, after dozens of false starts, after two years of recording, he couldn't bear to stop. Another argument with Landau ensued and eventually Bruce let go of the process, and the album appeared.

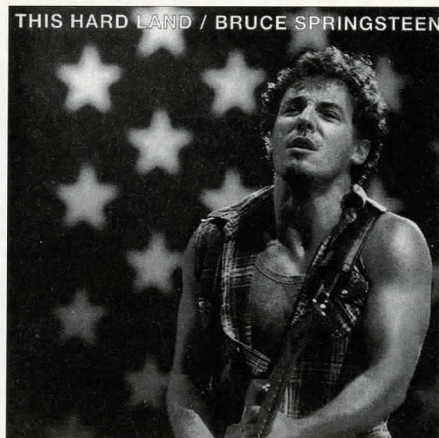
The final track line-up to *Born in the U.S.A.* did have one stutter step, however, before hitting the public. The final track line-up as delivered to CBS deleted "No Surrender" and "I'm Goin' Down," in favor of "Pink Cadillac." CBS went so far as to print up sleeves that listed the cuts to this version, though they were never put on sale to the public. It is somewhat unclear whether these sleeves represented an error on the part of the CBS art department or whether this line-up was seriously considered.

The album *Born in the U.S.A.* has gone on to sell in excess of 16 million copies worldwide. Dave Marsh does tell us that the six songs on side one were all songs originally recorded in 1982 and that the songs on side two mixed tracks from sessions in 1982, 1983 and 1984.

With the record done, Springsteen returned to the New Jersey clubs and played eight times



European bootleggers' attempts to recreate the "lost" *Murder, Inc.* album



in the two months before the record's release. On June 8, four days after the release of the album, Springsteen and the E Street Band (minus Patti) made a surprise appearance at the Stone Pony and debuted much of the new material including "Born in the U.S.A.," "Glory Days," "My Hometown," "Darlington County," and "Dancing in the Dark."

The Lost Masterpiece

While Dave Marsh's telling of the recording sessions is fascinating, it is by no means complete—the volume of material recorded was so huge it would require a book to tell the story of these sessions alone. But after *Born in the U.S.A.* came out, numerous studio outtakes leaked into the hands of fans, and helped fuel the speculation about the material that was not released.

The following titles are all known to have been recorded, confirmed by either studio records, interviews with Bruce or the band members, or live performances. The rest of the bunch include: "Man at the Top," "Don't Back Down," "Cynthia," "County Fair," "Dream Song," "None But the Brave," "One Love," "Robert Ford," "Seven Teardrops," "Sugarland," "This Hard Land," "T.V. Movie," "A Gun in Every Home," "Wages of Sin," and "Your Love is All Around Me." In the case of "Man at the Top," "Sugarland," and "This Hard Land," Springsteen eventually played those songs live.

Tapes have surfaced of outtakes like "None But the Brave" and "Cynthia," though little is known about the other titles and there are suggestions—and rumors—of another two dozen songs for which titles are not even known. And then there's the matter of the many many demos that Springsteen recorded during the early 1980s and the many songs he wrote that never even made it past the structure of a lyric sheet. Considering the many songs we know of, Springsteen's own figure of 50 songs represents only the material we are privy to. There is probably an equally large body of work that may forever remain undiscovered.

The "lost" *Born in the U.S.A.* outtake album is no single record but instead represents about five lost unreleased albums. That hasn't stopped bootleggers and fans from trying to piece together what those lost albums might have sounded like. There are at least three bootlegs that con-

centrate on *Born in the U.S.A.* studio outtakes. One of them, titled *This Hard Land*, presumes to represent the great lost *Murder Incorporated* album "in its original running order." It includes these songs: "Born in the U.S.A.," long version; "Murder Inc.," "My Love Will Not Let You Down"; "Glory Days," with an extra verse; "Working on the Highway"; "I'm Goin' Down"; "This Hard Land"; "Frankie"; "I'm on Fire"; "Downbound Train"; and "Darlington County." Another European bootleg titled *Murder Incorporated, The Lost Masterpiece* includes most of the songs on *This Hard Land* with the additional cuts "None But the Brave," "Drop On Down and Cover Me," "Sugarland," "Janey, Don't You Lose Heart," "Follow That Dream," and "Cynthia."

The suggestion of *Murder Inc.* as a title to the record was first rumored in late 1983 when news of the 1983 sessions leaked out. Even *Backstreets*, still in its infancy as a magazine at the time, reported on upcoming rumors of an album under that title and several journalists with large newspapers (like Robert Hilburn of the *L.A. Times*) were at least talking privately of a new album under that title by early 1984. The information no doubt leaked from some of the many friends that Springsteen shared information with in the early '80s and probably from some of the very same people that Springsteen asked to vote on the line-up of the record.

But did Bruce ever consider putting out an album called *Murder Incorporated*, did he ever come close to releasing this album? Perhaps, but considering the numerous false stops, the dozens of crises of faith during the long and arduous recording on *Born in the U.S.A.*, within Springsteen's mind there might have been two hundred different albums. Considering how hard it was for Springsteen to let go the recording sessions and actually release an album, there was probably very little chance that Springsteen would have released a 1983 album: It was only when he was literally brought to the point of emotional exhaustion that he was able to birth *Born in the U.S.A.*

"Murder Incorporated" remains a tremendous title, one of the most evocative that Springsteen has ever come up with (or appropriated). The song itself is powerful, driving yet somber, the perfect bridge between *Nebraska* and *Born in the U.S.A.*'s "Glory Days." ➤

Springsteen seems to be pulling songs out of the air. On 3/7, things seem to come together for the first time. Unlike the U.S. tour, where almost the entire *Murder, Inc.* album is played, here, Springsteen has scaled back the new songs to four or five a night.

3/8/85 The first bootleg from the current tour hits, a four-record box set called *Lost in the Flood*. An audience recording from 8/27/84, the sound leaves much to be desired.

3/9/85 London, England, Wembley Arena

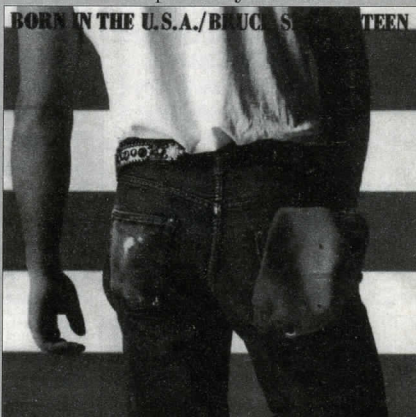
Set 1: Badlands/Out in the Street/A Gun in Every Home/Johnny 99/Reason to Believe/Darkness on the Edge of Town/Spirit in the Night/Growin' Up/Dangerous Corners/Meeting Across the River/Jungleland/Who'll Stop the Rain/Thunder Road. Set 2: The Price You Pay/Prove It All Night/Frankie/The River/Adam Raised A Cain/Night/Jackson Cage/Crush On You/Cadillac Ranch/Tenth Avenue Freeze-Out/Hungry Heart. Encores: The Promise/Murder, Inc./Backstreets/Born to Run/Rosalita/Detroit Medley/Ramrod. *Melody Maker* writes: "England is Finally Ready for Bruce Springsteen... Again!"

3/20/85 The *Murder, Inc.* album peaks at number seven on the Billboard album charts.

5/3/85 Brussels, Belgium, Vorst National

The final night of the European Tour. Springsteen and the E Street Band close with "Follow That Dream."

6/13/85 Much to the dismay of American fans, it's reported that there are no plans for further summer dates as previously indicated.



6/20/85 A tape of *Murder, Inc.* outtakes surfaces with collectors. It contains 12 songs: Born in the U.S.A. (full band rock outtake)/Cover Me/Darlington County/Working on the Highway/Downbound Train/I'm On Fire/No Surrender/Bobby Jean/I'm Goin' Down/Glory Days/Dancing in the Dark/My Hometown. Rumors begin to circulate about the lost album fans begin to call *Born in the U.S.A.* The songs seem to be much more radio-friendly and could possibly have sent Springsteen to the top of the charts and the music world. Most fans become divided on the outtakes—some support the politics of *Murder, Inc.*, while others prefer the more optimistic (at least on the surface) songs of *Born in the U.S.A.* It's not long before a bootleg record hits the market with an outtake from the *Murder, Inc.* photo sessions by Annie Leibovitz. It's a shot of Bruce standing in front of the American flag with his back to the camera. ➤

Trace L. Hull was the editor and designer of the now-defunct Springsteen fanzine, *Murder Inc.*, which ran the original version of this story.

ON COLLECT ING

By Lynn Elder,
Richard Breton,
and Jonathan B. Pont

For the benefit of our readers, *Backstreets* provides ratings of unauthorized releases currently in circulation. Don't write us asking where these can be obtained. *Backstreets* in no manner, shape, or form endorses these recordings. These reviews are provided by our columnists solely for informational purposes. Despite these words of warning, some collectors will still seek this material out, and for those collectors, our reviews should help you steer clear of the real losers.

Unauthorized CDs are growing in numbers and with that growth, expect some real rip-offs—our advice is let the buyer beware, and demand to listen to material before you buy it. Each title here has been rated for packaging, performance, and sound quality on a scale from one to ten, one being awful, and ten being quality generally found in legitimate releases.

POWER STATION		CLIENT: CBS Records	
441 WEST 23RD STREET NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10011 (212) 246-2000		PRODUCTION: Bruce Springsteen	
DATE: 10-17-79			
NAME: John Landis	REMARKS: 1st take	DATE: 10-17-79	TIME: 1:00
NAME: Neil Young	REMARKS: 2nd take	DATE: 10-17-79	TIME: 1:00
NAME: Neil Young	REMARKS: 3rd take	DATE: 10-17-79	TIME: 1:00
NAME: Neil Young	REMARKS: 4th take	DATE: 10-17-79	TIME: 1:00
NAME: Neil Young	REMARKS: 5th take	DATE: 10-17-79	TIME: 1:00
NAME: Neil Young	REMARKS: 6th take	DATE: 10-17-79	TIME: 1:00
NAME: Neil Young	REMARKS: 7th take	DATE: 10-17-79	TIME: 1:00
NAME: Neil Young	REMARKS: 8th take	DATE: 10-17-79	TIME: 1:00
NAME: Neil Young	REMARKS: 9th take	DATE: 10-17-79	TIME: 1:00
NAME: Neil Young	REMARKS: 10th take	DATE: 10-17-79	TIME: 1:00
NAME: Neil Young	REMARKS: 11th take	DATE: 10-17-79	TIME: 1:00
NAME: Neil Young	REMARKS: 12th take	DATE: 10-17-79	TIME: 1:00
NAME: Neil Young	REMARKS: 13th take	DATE: 10-17-79	TIME: 1:00
NAME: Neil Young	REMARKS: 14th take	DATE: 10-17-79	TIME: 1:00
NAME: Neil Young	REMARKS: 15th take	DATE: 10-17-79	TIME: 1:00
NAME: Neil Young	REMARKS: 16th take	DATE: 10-17-79	TIME: 1:00
NAME: Neil Young	REMARKS: 17th take	DATE: 10-17-79	TIME: 1:00
NAME: Neil Young	REMARKS: 18th take	DATE: 10-17-79	TIME: 1:00
NAME: Neil Young	REMARKS: 19th take	DATE: 10-17-79	TIME: 1:00
NAME: Neil Young	REMARKS: 20th take	DATE: 10-17-79	TIME: 1:00

•The Ties That Bind

Packaging: 7
Sound Quality: 10
Performance: 10

In the fall of 1979, Bruce Springsteen finished a series of songs that would comprise *The Ties That Bind*, his fifth album. CBS Records hoped for a Christmas release, or early 1980 at the latest, but Springsteen scrapped the project entirely after the songs were chosen and the album even sequenced. Hearing that lost album was only wishful thinking for Springsteen fans. Until now.

Original master tapes from the Power Station, location of

recording sessions for *The Ties That Bind* and its ultimate successor, *The River*, serve as the source for this release. As a result, the sound quality is superb, rivaling and often surpassing even the Japanese version of *The River* on CD (which sounds slightly warmer than its American counterpart).

The chief difference in sound is a greater ambience. Listeners will note a warmer, more intimate sound on common songs like "Hungry Heart" (which is identical to the officially released version) and on slightly different versions of familiar songs like "The Ties That Bind" and "The River." Perhaps the best example is "The Price You Pay," which Power Station notes indicate is the first take. Greater separation between the acoustic guitar (left channel) and electric guitar (right channel) and improved sound on Max Weinberg's snare and cymbals, not to mention the alternate third verse, make for a new aural experience. Furthermore, the E Street Band flat-out nailed this song on the first take.

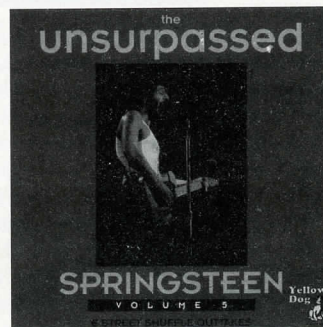
While fans will enjoy the alternate takes of songs that made it to *The River*, the flawless sound of still-unreleased gems "Cindy" and "Loose Ends" will cause jaws to drop. Sound on previously circulated tapes, records, and CDs has ranged from fair to very good, but *The Ties That Bind* will render those versions vastly inferior. The material is bright, distinct in both channels, pitched correctly, and without any of the evident flaws of the past. "Loose Ends," for example, contained a dropout near the end of Clarence Clemons' saxophone solo on most tapes. No such problem on this disc.

In addition to the quantum leap in sound, there are also considerable thematic differences that distinguish *The Ties That Bind* from *The River*. From the original version of "Stolen Car" (in its "Son, You May Kiss the Bride" arrangement) to the sequencing of the rockabilly "You Can Look (But You Better Not Touch)" immediately after "The River" (which opens the second side—contrast that with its place as the final song on the first disc of *The River*), this album is a more complex work than *The River*. Yet Springsteen told Marsh that after the excitement of the MUSE

shows in September, the album "seemed inadequate."

Packaging is good, too, using the Power Station notes as front and back covers. They detail dates, takes, etc., that give the album a sense of time. Liner notes in the fold-out booklet detail the songs' histories and the steps taken for the transfer from reel-to-reel to compact disc.

Fifteen years after Springsteen shelved *The Ties That Bind*, there is little to suggest inadequacy. And, for once, fans have as much proof as they need.



•Unsurpassed Springsteen Vol. 5: E Street Shuffle Outtakes

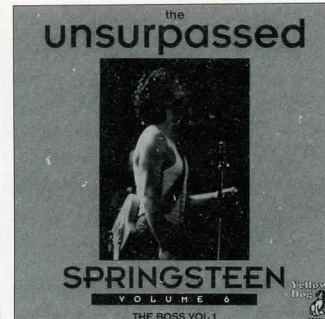
(Yellow Dog)
Packaging: 5
Sound Quality: 8
Performance: 8

•Unsurpassed Springsteen Vol. 6: The Boss Vol. 1

(Yellow Dog)
Packaging: 5
Sound Quality: 7
Performance: 8

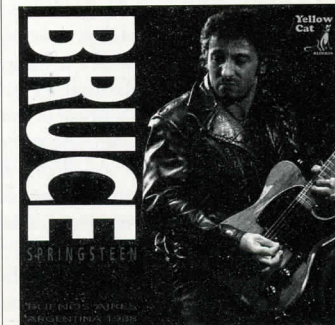
Finally, the next installments of the much lauded *Unsurpassed Springsteen* line have been released. Unfortunately, many of the tracks have already appeared on CD. In fact, Volume 5 only contains one "new" track, another alternate take of "Kitty's Back." Those who already have *Forgotten Songs*, *Born in the Studio*, and any one of several *Prodigal Son* sets may want to pass on Volume 5. Although the sound is certainly acceptable, it's just not as good as previously available. In particular, the tracks that are in common with *Born in the Studio* have lost some high end on this release, and "The Fever" sounds muddier and more distorted than the version found on *Forgotten Songs*. However, if you cannot find copies of those other classic boots, this one will suffice.

In contrast, the first four songs on Volume 6 have, for the most part, only been rumored to exist. The sound on these tracks—



"Janey Needs a Shooter," "The Ballad of the Self-Loading Pistol," "The Saga of the Architect," and "Winter Song"—is top-notch. These music publishing demo tracks have not been commonly available anywhere else until now; these songs are a true find. The rest of the disc consists of studio rehearsals with the E Street Band circa October 1978 during a *Darkness* tour break. While most of these tracks have been bootlegged before (and have little relation to the first four tracks), here is a more complete set in the best sound yet available.

Packaging for both discs, as with the previous Yellow Dog volumes, is minimal at best.



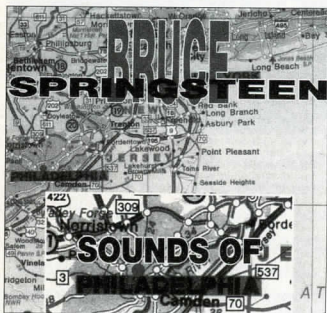
•Buenos Aires Argentina 1988

(Yellow Cat)
Packaging: 5
Sound Quality: 8
Performance: 8

I've never particularly cared for the "Human Rights Now" tour shows, and this set has certainly done nothing to sway me. Still, this is a fairly decent package documenting the last of the Amnesty International shows that was partially broadcast on FM radio world-wide. What the makers have attempted here is to take the best sounding tracks from either FM or TV broadcast sources to re-create the entire concert. The results are mixed. While the tracks taken from the FM broadcast sound okay (but still a bit "hissy"), the TV broad-

cast tracks don't fare as well, especially on the first disc. There's also some drop-out in the transition from one source to another during both "The Promised Land" and "War." The second disc has the better overall sound, but then this disc contains more FM broadcast tracks than TV broadcast ones.

What does make this show worth hearing is not so much the guest appearances on tracks like "The River," "Chimes Of Freedom," and "Get Up, Stand Up," or the sound quality on this set in particular, but the great audience participation on tracks like "Born in the U.S.A." and "I'm on Fire." And the audience-induced "La Bamba" section of "Twist and Shout"—which Bruce eventually takes to extend the middle instrumental portion of the song with a call-and-response—is a true delight.



•Sounds of Philadelphia

(Collectors Dream)

Sound Quality: 5

Packaging: 4

Performance: 9

As a blanket statement to those folks who find it in themselves to master a CD boot from what sounds like a tape copy several generations away from an obviously well-worn original vinyl source: *don't bother.*

It's too bad that's the case with this one, because this is the first time this marvelous show from the Spectrum in Philadelphia on 9/18/84 has made it onto CD. In the mid '80s, a definitive vinyl boot of this show appeared which was called *This Gun's For Hire*. Unfortunately (or fortunately depending on how you look at it), the vinyl boot still remains definitive. On *Sounds of Philadelphia* there's no top end and plenty of vinyl surface noise. Boosting the top end via any method rectifies the situation somewhat, but underscores the inherent vinyl surface and distortion.

Comparing the sound to the original vinyl, these CDs sound just plain awful.

It's a damn shame, too. This show has great versions of "State Trooper," "Reason to Believe," "Glory Days," "I Fought the Law," and "Growin' Up" (with the "killer cows" version of the "Lost in NJ with Clarence/Flat Tire" story). The encores (especially "Twist and Shout"/"Do You Love Me") are particularly fine. The Philly crowd that night is enjoyable to listen to and really makes the show sound even better. And you even get an early version of "Santa Claus..." which Bruce introduces as "the crazy Boss's Christmas in September." I never particularly cared much about the MTV interview, which is a chore to listen to with the vinyl surface noise seemingly even more pronounced.

There are no photos, no booklet, and nothing much else of interest except for the track listing on the back and on the rather plain blue discs. The unfortunate title owes no small part to the popularity of "Streets of Philadelphia," but I'm glad in a way that it was not named after its vinyl counterpart—I can still hope for a definitive CD version in the future. As for now, I feel compelled to mention that on the back cover are the words, "Watch out for the next releases!" Watch out, indeed! I couldn't have said it better myself.



•Warm and Tender Love

(Kiss The Stone)

Packaging: 6

Sound Quality: 7

Performance: 7

This is really a mixed bag. It starts off on the wrong note with a relatively bad sounding live version of "Streets of Philadelphia" as performed at the 1994 Academy Awards. Anyone who taped the performance in stereo that night certainly has a better sounding version. It's an unfortu-

nate misstep on the part of KTS, but to date no better version has appeared on another CD boot. The next five tracks are reportedly from a soundboard source of the afternoon rehearsals for the famed March 23, 1993 intimate showcase at the Count Basie Theater before Bruce embarked on the final leg of his last tour. On the plus side: a version of the Curtis Mayfield classic "Warm and Tender Love" that was not performed that night and has yet to be performed live. On the minus side: the sound is not great by any standards. I've yet to hear a decent tape of the Count Basie show, and this is no exception—even if it is reportedly from the soundboard.

After the first six tracks, things pick up nicely. There's some fantastic sounding tracks from the 1993 Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame Induction Ceremonies of Bruce playing guitar and singing backup for John Fogerty. Bruce's backing vocals on "Green River" and his lead vocal turn on "Born on the Bayou" are a real treat. Next up is Bruce's rousing version of "Glory Days" on the last *Late Night With David Letterman* show on NBC. On Bruce and Axl Rose's duet "Come Together" the sound is surprisingly great, but the performance is lacking. There's just no chemistry between these two guys. Much better is the "Curtis Mayfield Medley" performed at this year's Grammy Awards. The last two tracks are from the Woody Guthrie Tribute TV special which aired on PBS in the late '80s. The sound is perfect and the performances on these two tracks easily surpass the officially released studio versions found on the *Folkways: A Vision Shared* tribute CD.

Packaging is nothing special, just a few blurry photos of Bruce performing "Streets of Philadelphia" at the Academy Awards. The liner notes try (but fail) to justify the various contents of this disc.

Those who wish to have the 1993-94 Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame and *Late Night* tracks would do well to get this disc. It's also nice to have the excellent Grammy's performance and Folkways tracks on CD. And if Bruce never performs "Warm and Tender Love" again, this is the only place you'll find it. Too bad about

"Streets of Philadelphia" from the Oscars—they should have taken the alternate vocal version from the video instead (which has yet to appear on CD).



•Follow That Dream

(Golden Stars)

Packaging: 6

Sound Quality: 7

Performance: 9

This set documents the first of Bruce's two nights in Stockholm in 1981. Tapes of both shows made it to vinyl, with very good sound and nice packaging (May 8 was titled *Teardrops on the City*). Judging solely from the sound quality, transfer to CD in the instance of this show proves successful.

The performance is among the best of the European tour, from Bruce's passionate interpretation of "Follow that Dream" to the second set trilogy of "Stolen Car," "Racing in the Street," and "Backstreets." The audience contributes, too, and the recording captures both the enthusiastic applause and the absolute silence during the slower songs. Bonus songs from the second night include the stunning cover of John Fogerty's "Run Through the Jungle," "The Ties That Bind," and "Wreck on the Highway."

The sound quality is an improvement over that found on vinyl, but the reasons aren't entirely clear. It's possible that the vinyl was used as the source, transferred straight on to CD, or that the original master cassette tapes were used. In any event, the signal was re-equalized for the CD, making for a more rich, upfront sound than its vinyl counterpart (same thing for the bonus songs from May 8).

The packaging is good, but only uses the centerspread photo from the vinyl set as the cover. If you have the vinyl, equalize the sound yourself, make a better cassette, and save money for another title. ➡

The Early Years hits the States

Prodigal Son songs released

After months of well-publicized legal wrangling over *Prodigal Son*, the material in question—though not the specific title—suddenly became available worldwide. While the proposed U.K. release of *Prodigal Son* is still embroiled in court proceedings, *The Early Years*, on the Holland-based Early Records, contains exactly the same material most fans thought would never see the light of day.

The track listing of *The Early Years* set is identical to that of the proposed *Prodigal Son* release, spreading 23 tracks over two CDs. As its title implies, the songs collected are from Springsteen's most prolific period in the early '70s, and it includes both solo demos and full-band versions (for more information see *Backstreets* #45 and #46).

For the first full Springsteen release—possibly "official"—not associated with Columbia, *The Early Years* has received surprisingly little press. Gary Graff, critic for the *Detroit Free Press*, mentioned the set briefly, describing it as "the first legitimate production of *Prodigal Son* material...that should have Bruce Springsteen fans clamoring." The set was given a more complete review by the *Toronto Sun*'s John Sakamoto in September. Otherwise, there has been little coverage of the CD since its release in early August.

This lack of press could be due to some understandable confusion surrounding the legitimacy of the release. It was at first considered a "gray-area" item by some, but *The Early Years* has thus far been treated as official by many U.S. record stores. Many U.S. importers have acted to satisfy the demand, and as far as we know, Springsteen and his record company have not taken any action against it. *The Early Years* turned up largely in legitimate record stores and chains while most bootleg outlets in the U.S. didn't carry it. The CD set was first spotted in the Virgin

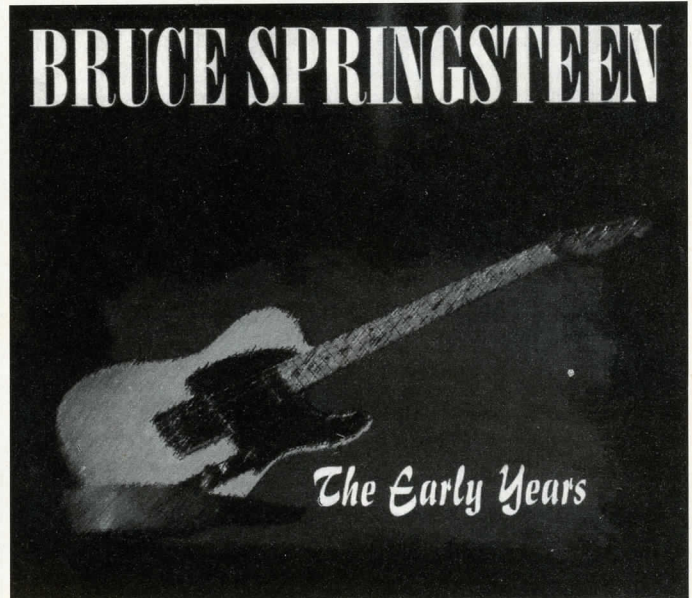
Records store in Los Angeles, and has since been reportedly stocked by stores such as Strawberries and HMV both in Canada and the United States.

Though it is certainly the first "official" one, *The Early Years* is not the first CD release of this material. Since Sony and Springsteen managed to get a cease and desist order against Dare International's *Prodigal Son* release, European labels have turned out two separate bootlegs which duplicate the track listings. Each is also titled *Prodigal Son* and presumably mastered from Dare's advance cassettes. In addition to the obvious fact that these CDs are considered illegal in most markets, they also suffered from inferior sound quality.

The primary appeal of the original *Prodigal Son*—besides the promise of seven songs never heard before—was that not only would it be an official album, but that it would have the impeccable sound quality of such a release. As Gavin Dare told *Backstreets* earlier this year, *Prodigal Son* was to be mastered from "original studio master tapes... The quality is superb. We've had our people mix and digitize them." The source for *The Early Years* is unclear, but it would seem that Early had access to those masters; their release certainly lives up to Dare's promise of superb sound quality.

Apparent access to the masters notwithstanding, no connection has been demonstrated between Dare International and Early Records. Differences in the law between Holland and the U.K. may account for Early's ability to manufacture the album. It has also been suggested that the title change and the lack of any photos or likenesses of Springsteen in the packaging facilitated its official release.

In other news, it has been 15 years since Springsteen played the Concerts for a Non-Nuclear Future, staged by Musicians United for Safe Energy (MUSE). *No Nukes*, the resulting three-



record set, marked the only official release of Springsteen and the E Street Band's "Devil With the Blue Dress Medley" (as it was listed), as well as "Stay," with Jackson Browne.

The vinyl has long been out of print and difficult to find, and *No Nukes* has yet to be released on compact disc. A compact disc reissue is in the works, however, according to Ken Kwartler, who originally worked on the project. Kwartler talked to *Backstreets* about his recent discussions with Graham Nash concerning the "much anticipated but long delayed" CD release of the *No Nukes* set.

Nash, who performed at the MUSE concerts, also co-produced the album and has all the tapes in his possession, according to Kwartler. So at least one common obstacle in a re-release of this kind won't present itself—the masters are accounted for. Another possible stumbling block, as yet unresolved, will be the question of how to distribute the proceeds, due to the fact that MUSE has since dissolved. But it seems that the main thing holding up progress has been simply the conversion of the track listing on the three-LP package to the compact disc format. Discus-

sions have been focusing on the fact that there are too many songs for two CDs, and not enough for three.

At least, not enough originally released material. Springsteen's set, for instance, consisted of a total of 12 songs (including the debut of "The River"), but only two of those appeared on the officially released *No Nukes* vinyl. A three-CD set, Kwartler points out, could include songs that were included in the film but not on the records, or even songs that were omitted from both.

Kwartler also speculates, however, that a record company (presumably Elektra, in this case; the original release was on Elektra/Asylum Records) would be more likely to "cut some of the presently less marketable acts and release a two-CD package emphasizing Springsteen, Raitt, Browne, CSN, Petty, Taylor, and the Doobies."

Patti Scialfa has a song from *Rumble Doll* included on the first disc of a Time-Life series called *Grooves*. The series is a bi-monthly one, with 16 new songs from different artists on each disc. In addition to Scialfa's "Come Tomorrow," the first installment also includes The Band's cover of "Atlantic City." ➤

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